

# FRONTISPIECE

Vol. II.



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Wells sc.

Gil Blas paying his addresses to a  
Widow of Quality.

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THE  
ADVENTURES  
OF  
Gil Blas of Santillane.

A NEW TRANSLATION,

By T. SMOLLETT, M.D.

AUTHOR OF RODERICK RANDOM.

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VOL. II.

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ADVANCE

Gil Blas of



T H E  
A D V E N T U R E S  
O F  
GIL BLAS of Santillane.

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[Continuation of BOOK II. CHAP. IV.]

CAMILLA did not seem to remember me; whether the oppression of her own distemper, or my physical garb, secured me from her recollection. Laying hold of her arm, in order to feel the pulse, I perceived my ring upon her finger, at sight of which I felt a terrible emotion, and a violent desire of attempting to retrieve it; but considering that the women might fall a-crying; and Don Raphael, or some other champion of the fair sex come to their assistance, I was at pains to resist the temptation: and imagining it would be better to dissemble and take the advice of Fabricius, stuck to this last resolution. In the mean time the old woman pressing me to let her know the nature of her niece's distemper, I was not fool enough to own myself ignorant of the matter; but on the contrary, affecting the man of skill, and copying my master's deportment, I told her with great gravity, that the distemper proceeded from the patient's want of perspiration, and that of consequence she must be speedily blooded, that evacuation being the only substitute of perspiration: I likewise prescribed warm water, that the rules of our practice might be exactly observed.

Having made my visit as short as possible, I ran to find the son of Nunnez, whom I met at the door, going out to execute a commission for his master: I

told him my new adventure, asking if he thought I should cause Camilla to be arrested in the course of law; he answered, "Not at all: that is not the way to see thy ring again; for the officers of justice hate to make restitution. Remember the jail of Astorga, where thy horse, money, and even thy cloaths, were detained by these harpies. We must rather make use of our own industry in recovering thy jewel: I'll undertake to find out some stratagem for that purpose; and will think of it in my way to the hospital, where I carry a short message to the steward from my master; go and wait for me at our tavern, and be not impatient, for I will be with thee in a very little time."

He did not, however, arrive at the rendezvous till after I had been there three hours, and then so disguised that at first I did not know him; for he changed his dress, twisted his hair into a queue, covered one half of his face with a pair of artificial whiskers, provided himself with a huge sword, the hilt of which was at least three feet in circumference; and marched at the head of five men who looked as fierce as himself, and wore also long rapiers, and thick mustachoes. "Your servant, Signior Gil Blas (said he accosting me) you see in me an Alguazil of a new stamp, and in these brave fellows who accompany me, soldiers of the same model. Shew us only the house of the woman who stole your diamond, and be assured that we will make her restore it in a twinkling." I embraced Fabricius at this discourse, which explained the stratagem he intended to put in practice in my behalf; and assured him that I very much approved of his expedient. I saluted also the false soldiers, who were three valets, and two journeymen barbers of his acquaintance, whom he had engaged to act this part. Having treated the whole brigade with wine, we went altogether in the twilight to Camilla's lodgings, and knocked at the door, which the old woman opened, and taking my attendants for the terriers of justice, who never entered

entered that house without cause, was seized with consternation. "Courage, good mother (said Fabricius to her) we are come hither only on account of a small affair that will soon be determined." So saying, we advanced to the chamber of the sick person, conducted by the old woman who walked before, lighting us with a wax taper in a silver candlestick. Taking the candle in my hand, I went towards the bed, and discovering my face to Camilla, "Perfidious woman! (said I) behold the too credulous Gil Blas, whom you have tricked. Ah, wretch! I have found you at last, and the corregidor in consequence of my information has ordered this Alguazil to apprehend you. Come Mr. Tipstaff (said I to Fabricius) do your office." There is no occasion (answered he, raising his voice) for exhorting me to do my duty. I remember that there creature, who has been a long time marked in my memorandum-book with red letters. Rise my princess (added he) dress yourself with all dispatch, I intend to be your usher, and conduct you to the city-jail, if you think well of it."

At these words, Camilla, sick as she was, perceiving that two of his followers, with the great whiskers, were about to drag her out by force, sat up in her bed, clasped her hands in a suppliant posture, and looking at me with terror in her eyes, "Signior Gil Blas (said she) I conjure you, by the chaste mother who bore you, to have pity upon me; though I am very guilty, I am still more unfortunate; don't ruin me, I will restore your ring." So saying, she took it off from her finger and put it into my hand. But I told her my diamond alone would not suffice, and that she must besides make restitution of the thousand ducats which had been stole from me in the furnished lodgings. "Oh Signior! (she replied) do not ask your ducats of me; the traitor Don Raphael, whom I have not seen since that time, carried them off the same night." "Oho, my little darling (said Fabricius to her) you think to get out of the scrape by de-

nying you had any share in the booty; but you shan't be so easily quit I assure you; your being an accomplice of Don Raphael is a sufficient reason for obliging you to give an account of your past life. You have, doubtless, a great many things on your conscience; and therefore you shall go to prison (if you please) and make a general confession. I will carry this old gentlewoman thither also (added he); for I imagine she knows a great many curious stories, which the corregidor will not be sorry to hear."

At these words, the two women put every thing in practice to melt us; filling the chamber with cries, groans, and lamentations: while the old woman on her knees (sometimes before the Alguazil, and sometimes before his attendants) endeavoured to move their compassion; Camilla implored me in the most affecting manner, to save her from the hands of justice. Upon which I pretended to relent, saying to the son of Nunnez, "Mr. Officer, since I have got my diamond I am satisfied: I don't desire to give this poor woman any further trouble; and would not even seek the death of a sinner." "For shame! (said he) a man of your humanity would make a bad trooper: but I must acquit myself of my commission, by which I am expressly ordered to apprehend these infants; for the corregidor wants to make an example of them." "For heaven's sake! (I replied) have some regard to entreaty, and abate a little of your severity, in consideration of the present which these ladies will offer." "Oh! that's another affair (said he) that is what we call a figure of rhetoric well placed.—Come, let us see what they have got to give me?" "I have (said Camilla) a pearl necklace, and ear-rings of a considerable value." Here she was interrupted with, "Yes, but if they come from the Philippine isles, I'll have none of them." "You may take them upon my word, I'll warrant them genuine," said she, at the same time desiring the old woman to bring a little box, out of which she took the necklace and ear-rings,

rings, and put them into the Alguazil's hand. Tho' he knew no more of jewels than I did, he was persuaded that the diamonds of the ear-rings were genuine, as well as the pearls of the necklace; therefore having examined them attentively, "These jewels (said he) seem to be of a good water, and provided the silver candlestick, which Signior Gil Blas has in his hand, be added to them, I won't answer for my fidelity." I don't believe, said I to Camilla, that you will for a trifle break off a treaty so much to your advantage. So saying, I gave the light to the old woman, and the candlestick to Fabricius, who being satisfied with what he had got, because perhaps he saw nothing else in the room which he could easily carry off, said to the ladies, "Adieu my princesses, live in peace. I will speak to the corregidor, and represent you whiter than snow: for such as we can give what turn we please to things, and never tell him the plain truth, except when we are under no temptation to lie."

## C H A P. V.

*The sequel of the ring retrieved. Gil Blas quits the profession of physic, and makes his retreat from Valladolid.*

AFTER having in this manner executed the scheme of Fabricius, we left Camilla's lodgings, congratulating ourselves upon a piece of success that even surpassed our expectation; for we had laid our account with recovering the ring only. However, we carried off the rest without ceremony: and far from making a scruple of robbing courtezans, we thought we had done a meritorious action.—"Gentlemen (said Fabricius, when we had got into the street) it is my opinion that we should go back to the tavern, and spend the night in making merry. To-morrow we will sell the candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings, and share the money like brothers; after which we will return to our several homes, and make the best excuse we can to our masters." This proposal of the Alguazil seem-



ing very reasonable to us all, we returned to the tavern; some of us believing we could easily find an excuse for having lain abroad, and others not caring whether they should be dismissed or no.

We ordered a good supper, and sat down to table with as much appetite as good humour. The repast was seasoned with a thousand agreeable fallacies; and Fabricius in particular enlivened the conversation, and diverted us all extremely, by innumerable strokes replete with Castilian salt, which is equal at least to the antient Attic.—But while we were in this jovial disposition, our mirth was all of a sudden overcast by an unforeseen accident. A man of a pretty good mein entered the room where we were at supper, followed by two others of terrible aspect; after these three more appeared, and we counted no less than twelve who came in thus, three by three, armed with carbines, swords, and bayonets.—We soon perceived them to be the soldiers of the patrol, and it was not difficult to guess their intention; wherefore we had some thoughts at first of making resistance, but they surrounded us in an instant, and kept us in awe, as well by their numbers as their fire-arms.—“Gentlemen (said the commander to us with a sneer) I know by what ingenious artifice you have recovered a ring from the hands of a certain she-adventurer: and to be sure, the contrivance is excellent, and richly deserves a public recompence, which you shall by no means miss.—Justice has already appointed an apartment for you in her own house, and will not fail to reward such a masterly attempt.” This discourse very much disconcerted all those to whom it was addressed: our countenances changed, and we felt in our turn, the same fear with which we had inspired Camilla. Fabricius, however, though pale and dismayed, endeavoured to justify what we had done. “Sir (said he) as we had no bad intention, this little trick might be forgiven.” “How the devil, (cried the commandant in a rage) do you call this a little trick? Don’t you know



Know that it is a hanging matter? For, besides that no man is allowed to do justice to himself, without the cognizance of the law, you have carried off a candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings, that did not belong to you; and, which is still worse, in order to commit that robbery, you have disguised yourselves like tip-staves.—Wretches! to dress yourselves in the habit of such honourable people to do mischief! I shall think you very lucky if you are only sent to the galleys.” When he had convinced us that the affair was much more serious than we at first imagined, we fell down together at his feet, and begged he would have pity on our youth. But our prayers were unregarded; and besides, he rejected a proposal we made, of quitting to him the necklace, ear-rings, and candlestick: even my ring was refused, because (I suppose) it was offered before too much company.—In short, he was quite inexorable; ordered my companions to be disarmed, and carried us all together to the public jail. In our way thither, one of the guard told me, that the old woman who lived with Camilla, suspecting that we were not the real foot-pads of justice, had followed us to the tavern; and there, being confirmed in her opinion, had revenged herself upon us, by informing the patrolle of the whole affair.

We were immediately plundered of every thing; the necklace, diamonds, and candlestick seized; as also my ring, together with the ruby of the Philippine isles, which I had unfortunately in my pocket. They did not even spare the rials which I had that day received for my prescriptions; which was a sure sign to me, that the people belonging to justice at Valladolid are as expert in their office as those at Astorga, and that the manners of all these gentlemen are every where alike. While I was rifled of my jewels and cash, the officer of the patrolle recounted our adventure to these agents of the plunder; and the affair seemed to them of such a serious nature, that the majority thought we deserved a halter; but others, less

severe, imagined we might get off for two hundred lashes each, and a few years service in the galleys—Until the corregidor should think proper to decide our affair, we were locked up in a dungeon, where we lay upon straw, with which it was strewed like a stable littered for horses.—Here we might have remained long enough, and at last exchanged our habitation for the galleys, had not Signior Manuel Ordonez next day heard of our misfortune, and resolved to procure the liberty of Fabricius, which he could not do without obtaining also the dismissal of us all. Being a man very much esteemed in the city, he did not spare solicitations; and partly by his own credit, and partly by that of his friends, at the end of three days effected our enlargement. But we did not come out as we had gone in; the candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings, my ring, ruby, and rials, being detained: which made me remember those verses of Virgil that begin with, “*Sic vos non vobis.*”

As soon as we were set at liberty we returned to our masters; and doctor Sangrado received me very kindly, saying, my poor Gil Blas, I did not hear of thy misfortune till this morning, and was just going to make strong solicitations in thy behalf. Thou must console thyself, my friend, for this accident, and attach thyself more than ever to physic.” “That is my design,” (said I) and truly I thought of nothing else. Far from wanting business, it happened, as my master had foretold, that distempers were very rife, the small-pox and putrid fever beginning to ravage the city and suburbs; so that all the physicians in Valladolid, and we in particular, had abundance of practice.—Scarce a day passed, in which we did not visit eight or ten patients each; from whence it may be easily conceived what a quantity of blood was spilt, and water drank. But I do not know how it happened, all our sick died, either on account of our malpractice, or because their diseases were incurable.—Certain it is, we very seldom had occasion to

- make

make three visits to one patient : at the second we were either told, that he was just going to be buried, or found at the last gasp ; and as I was but a young physician, who had not yet time to be inured to murder, I began to be very uneasy at the fatal events which might be laid to my charge.—“ Sir, (said I, one evening, to Dr. Sangrado) I take heaven to witness that I follow your method with the utmost exactness ; yet nevertheless, every one of my patients leaves me in the lurch. It looks as if they took a pleasure in dying, merely to bring our practice into discredit. This very day I met two of them that were going to their long home.” “ Why truly child (answered he) I have reason to make pretty much the same observation : I have not often the satisfaction of curing those who fall into my hands ; and if I was not so sure as I am of the principles on which I proceed, I should think my remedies were pernicious in almost all the cases that come under my care.” “ If you will take my advice, Sir, (said I) we will change our method, and give chymical preparations to our patients, through curiosity ; the worst that can happen will only be that they produce the same effect that follows our bleedings and warm water.” “ I would willingly make that experiment, (he replied) provided it could have no bad consequence ; but I have published a book, in which I have extolled the use of frequent bleeding and aqueous draughts ; and would thou have me go and decry my own work ?” “ Oh ! you are certainly in the right, (said I) you must not give your enemies such a triumph over you ; they would say, you are at last disabused, and therefore ruin your reputation : perish rather the nobility, clergy, and people ! and let us continue in our old path. After all, our brother doctors, notwithstanding their aversion for bleeding, perform as few miracles as we do ; and I believe their drugs are no better than our specifics.”

We

We went to work, therefore, afresh, and proceeded in such a manner, that, in less than six weeks, we made more widows and orphans than the siege of Troy. By the number of burials, one would have thought that the plague was in Valladolid; and every day some father came to our house, to demand an account of his son whom we had ravished from him, or some uncle, to upbraid us with his nephew's death. As for the sons and nephews, whose fathers and uncles we had dispatched, they never appeared to complain: the husbands too were very civil, and never cavilled with us about the loss of their wives. But those afflicted people, whose reproaches we were obliged to undergo, were sometimes very brutal in their grief, and called us ignorant assassins. As they did not spare me, in particular, I was afflicted by their epithets: but my master, who was used to such accidents, heard them without the least emotion. I might, perhaps, in time, have been accustomed to reproach, as well as he, if heaven, doubtless to rid the sick people in Valladolid of one of their most severe scourges, had not produced an occasion that gave me a disgust to physic, which I practised with so little success.

There was in our neighbourhood a tennis-court to which the idle people in town daily resorted, and, among the rest one of your professed bullies who take upon themselves the office of arbiters, and decide all differences that happen. He was from Biscay, his name Don Rodrigo de Mondragon, about thirty years of age, of an ordinary make, but lean and muscular: he had two little twinkling eyes, that rolled in his head, and threatened every body he looked at; a very flat nose, placed between red whiskers, that curled up to his very temples, and a manner of speaking so rough and passionate, that his words struck terror into every body. This racket-breaker had made himself tyrant of the tennis-court, where he judged all the disputes that happened among those who played, in the most imperious manner, and no man durst

appeal

appeal from his decision, unless he could resolve to fight him next day. Such as I have described Don Rodrigo, who, notwithstanding the Don he had prefixed to his name, was an arrant rascal, he captivated the mistress of the tennis-court, who was a woman about forty years of age, rich and agreeable enough, and in the fifteenth month of her widowhood. I know not how he won her heart; for, doubtless, it was not by his beauty; but surely, by that *je ne sçai* quoy which cannot be expressed. Be that as it will, she had a passion for him, and actually designed to take him for her husband; but while preparations were making for the consummation of that affair, she fell sick, and unhappily employed me as her physician. If her distemper had not been a malignant fever, my prescriptions were sufficient to endanger her life: so that, in four days, I filled the tennis-court with mourning; the mistress went the way of all my patients, and her relations took possession of her estate. Don Rodrigo, made desprate by the loss of his mistress, or rather by being baulked in his expectation of a very advantageous match, not only cursed and reviled me, but also swore, that he would run me through the body, whenever he could catch me, and exterminate me from the face of the earth. A charitable neighbour informed me of this oath, and advised me not to stir abroad, for fear of meeting this devil of a man. This advice, which I had no intention to neglect, filled me with confusion and dismay: I fancied incessantly, that I saw this furious Biscayman coming into the house; and could not enjoy one moment's repose. This effectually detached me from physic, and my sole care was how to free myself from disquiet; I resumed my embroidered suit, and after having bid adieu to my master, who could not persuade me to stay, quitted the city at day-break, not without apprehension of meeting Don Rodrigo in my way.

## C H A P. VI.

*Of his route when he left Valladolid ; and the person he joined on the road.*

I walked very fast, looking behind me, from time to time, to see if this formidable Biscayan was not at my heels : my imagination being so much possessed by that fellow, that I took every tree or bush, I saw, for him ; and every moment felt my heart throb with fear. I plucked up my courage, however, when I had gone a good league, and continued, at an easier pace, my journey towards Madrid, whither my purpose was to go. I should have quitted Valladolid without regret, had I not been sorry to part from Fabricius, my dear Pylades, to whom I could not so much as bid adieu ; but it gave me no mortification to renounce physic ; on the contrary, I begged pardon of God for having exercised it at all ; though I did not fail to count, with pleasure, the money I had in my purse, notwithstanding its being the salary of my assassinations : in that respect, resembling those ladies of pleasure, who reform their morals, but, nevertheless, keep fast hold of the wages of sin. My whole fortune amounted to pretty near the value of five ducats, in rials ; on the strength of which I expected to reach Madrid, where I did not doubt of finding some good place : besides, I longed passionately to see that august city, which had been extolled to me as the epitome of all the wonders of the world.

While I recollected all that I had heard in its praise, and enjoyed its pleasures by anticipation, I heard the voice of a man, behind me, singing at full stretch ; he had a leathern wallet on his back, a guitar hanging about his neck, a long sword by his side, and walked so fast, that he was up with me in a very short time. Being one of the two barbers, with whom I had been imprisoned in the adventure of the ring, we knew one another immediately, though our dress was altered

altered, and were very much surprized at meeting so unexpectedly on the highway. I assured him, that I was extremely glad to have him for a fellow-traveller, and his joy seemed no less at meeting with me. I told him my reason for quitting Valladolid; and he reposed the same confidence in me, by letting me know that he had quarrelled with his master, and bid him an eternal adieu. "If I had been inclined (added he) to live any longer in Valladolid, I could have found employment in abundance of shops; for, without vanity, I can handle a razor, and curl a mustachoe as well as e'er a barber in Spain: but I could no longer resist the violent desire I had to visit the place of my nativity, from which I have been absent these ten years: I want to breathe my own country air a little, and know the situation of my family, with whom I hope to be in two days; for they live at a place called Olmedo, a market-town on this side of Segovia.

Resolving to accompany this barber to his own home, and from thence go to Segovia, in order to take the opportunity of some convenience to Madrid, we pursued our journey, and discoursed of indifferent subjects. He was a young fellow of some wit and humour; and when we had conversed together an hour, he asked how my stomach was disposed: I answered, that he should see at the first inn. Upon which he said, "We had better make a pause in the mean time: I have something for breakfast in my wallet; for when I travel I always take care to have provision along with me: I don't trouble myself with cloaths, linen, and other useless baggage; but, resolving to have nothing superfluous, fill my knapsack with belly-timber, my razors, and a wash-ball." I commended his prudence, and consented, with all my heart, to the pause he proposed; for I was hungry, and resolved to make a good meal, which I could not but expect, after what he had told me. We turned a little out of the highway, in order to sit  
upon



upon the grass, where my friend, the barber, took out his victuals, consisting of five or six onions, with a few crusts of bread and cheese; but what he produced, as the best furniture of his budget, was a little bottle, full (as he said) of delicate wine. Though our dishes were not very savoury, hunger, being very urgent with us both, made them relish pretty well; and we emptied the bottle, which contained about two pints, of a sort of wine that I don't chuse to boast much of; after which, we got up, and continued our journey with great good humour. The barber, who had been informed, by Fabricius, that I had met with some very particular adventures, desired to hear them from my own mouth; a satisfaction I could not refuse to a man who had regaled me so sumptuously. When I had gratified his curiosity, I told him he could do no less, in return for my complaisance, than recount the story of his own life. "Oh! as for my story (cried he) it is not worth hearing, as it contains nothing but ordinary facts: nevertheless (added he) since we have nothing else to do, you shall hear it, such as it is. So saying, he related it, nearly in these words.

## CH A P. VII.

### *The story of the journeyman barber.*

**F**ERDINAND Peres de la Fuente, my grandfather, (I go to the fountain-head) after having been fifty years barber in the village of Olmedo, died, and left four sons, the eldest of whom took possession of his shop, and succeeded him in the business; Bertrand, the second, having an inclination for trade, became a mercer; Thomas, who was the third, kept a school; and the fourth, whose name was Pedro, feeling himself born for the belles lettres, sold a little lot of ground, which he had for his patrimony, and went to live at Madrid, where he hoped, one day, to distinguish himself by his wit and learning; while his

three



three brothers did not separate, but, settling at Olmedo, married the daughters of husbandmen, who, in lieu of fortune, brought them abundance of children, breeding as if it had been for a wager. My mother, the barber's wife, brought six into the world, for her share, in the first five years of her marriage, of which number I am one. My father taught me betimes to shave, and when I arrived at the age of fifteen, put this wallet upon my shoulders, and girding me with a long sword, said, "Go, Diégo, thou art now in a condition to gain a livelihood: go and see the world; thou hast occasion for a little travelling, to rub thee up, and make thee perfect in thy business. March, and don't return to Olmedo, before thou hast made a tour of Spain. Let me not hear from thee until this be performed." At these words, he embraced me very affectionately, and turned me out of doors.

Such was the behaviour of my father at parting with me. But my mother, whose manners were not quite so rough, seemed more affected on this occasion; she let fall some tears, and even slipped a ducat privately into my hand. So I quitted Olmedo, and took the road to Segovia; of which, however, I had not walked above two hundred paces, when I stopt to examine my knapsack, being desirous of seeing what it contained, and of knowing precisely the extent of my possession. I found a case and two razors, so much wore, that they seemed to have shaved ten generations, with a thong of leather to set them, and a lump of soap: besides, there was a canvas shirt quite new, an old pair of my father's shoes, and, what gave me more pleasure than all the rest, twenty rials wrapt in a linen rag. This was my whole fortune, by which you may conclude, that master Nicolas the barber relied a good deal on my skill, since he sent me away so poorly provided. Nevertheless, the possession of a ducat and twenty rials did not fail to charm a young fellow like me, who had never before  
been

been master of coin : I believed my funds were inexhaustible, and continued my journey in a transport of joy, admiring, every moment, the hilt of my sword, which thumped against my hams, or got between my legs, at every step.

Arriving at the village of Ataquines, in the evening, very sharp set, I went to lodge at an inn, and, as if I had been a man of fortune, called for supper, with an air of authority : the landlord having surveyed me some time, and seeing who he had to do with, said, in a very obliging manner, " Master, you shall be satisfied ; we will treat you like a prince." So saying, he shewed me into a little room ; where, in a quarter of an hour, they brought me a ragout made of a ram cat, which I eat as greedily as if it had been composed of a rabbit or hare. This excellent dish was accompanied with wine, so good, as he said, that the king himself could not drink better. Notwithstanding this eulogium, I perceived it was curstfully sour ; but this did not hinder me from doing as much honour to it, as I had already done to the ragout : and, to complete the treatment of a prince, I was conducted to a couch, more proper for encouraging watchfulness than sleep ; being a truckle-bed so narrow and short, that, little as I was, I had not room to lie in it with my legs extended ; besides, instead of mattress and feather-bed, it had only a wretched flock-bed, covered with a doubled sheet, which had served an hundred different travellers, at least, since the last washing. Nevertheless, in such a convenience, my stomach full of ragout, and that delicious wine which the landlord had recommended, thanks to my youth and constitution, I enjoyed a sound sleep, and spent the night without indigestion.

Next day, after having breakfasted and paid sauce for my good cheer, I made but one stage to Segovia ; and on my first arrival had the good fortune to be employed in a shop for my board and lodging : here, however, I staid but six months : being seduced by  
a brother

a brother journeyman of my acquaintance who longed to see Madrid : and with whom I set out for that city. There I got a place on the same term as at Segovia, in a well accustomed shop, much frequented on account of the neighbourhood of the church of Santa Cruz, and the prince's theatre : my master, two journeymen and I, being scarce sufficient to trim all our customers, who consisted of people of all ranks, and among others of players and authors. One day two persons of the last profession being there together, began to discourse about the poetry and poets of the time, and hearing them mention the name of my uncle, I listened to their conversation with great attention. " Don Juan de Zavaleta (said one of them) is an author, in my opinion, beneath the public notice ; a cold genius, a man without fancy : his last piece has done him infinite prejudice." And pray (said the other) has ever Lewis Vellez de Guevara produced a good work ? Was ever any thing more wretched than his performances ?" They named a great many more poets whom I have forgot. I remember only, that they spoke contemptuously of them all except my uncle, of whom they made honourable mention, agreeing that he was a lad of merit. " Yes (said one of them) Don Pedro de la Fuente is an excellent writer : his books contain a delicate raillery mixed with erudition, which makes them agreeably satirical ; and I am not at all surprized at his being esteemed by the court and city, or at his receiving salaries from several grandees. " He has, indeed, said the other, enjoyed a pretty large income these many years ; and as he lives with the Duke of Medina Celi, and spends little, must be worth a considerable sum of money."

I did not lose one word which the poets said concerning my uncle, who we had heard in the family, made a noise in Madrid by his works, some people travelling through Olmedo having told us so ; but as he neglected to let us hear from him, and seemed quite

quite detached from his relations, we on our part lived in as great indifference towards him. True blood is however always guided by a sure instinct: as soon as I heard that he was in good circumstances, and knew where he lodged, I was tempted to wait upon him, though one thing embarrassed me not a little, his being called Don Pedro by the authors. That Don gave some uneasiness, and I was afraid he might be some other poet than my uncle. I was not however stopt by this consideration; but imagined that he might have been ennobled on account of his wit, and therefore resolved to go and see him. For this purpose, with my master's permission, I dressed myself one morning, as well as I could, and went out of the shop, not a little proud of being nephew to a man who had acquired such reputation by his genius. As the barbers are not the least vain people in the world, I began to conceive a great opinion of myself, and strutting with an haughty air, enquired for the house of the Duke de Medina Celi, where presenting myself at the gate, and saying, I wanted to speak with Don Pedro de la Fuente, the porter pointed with his finger to a little stair-case at the further end of a court, which he bid me ascend, and knock at the door on my right hand: I did so, and (a young man coming out) asked if Signior Don Pedro de la Fuente lodged there. "Yes (said he) but you cannot see him at present." "I should be very glad (I replied) to speak with him, for I bring him news of his family." "If you could bring him news of the Pope (said he) I would not introduce you to his chamber just now, for he is composing; and when that is the case, we must take care not to disturb his imagination; he will not be visible till noon, so that you may go and take a turn, and come back about that time."

I took his advice, and walked through the city the whole morning, thinking continually on the reception I should meet with from my uncle, who I imagined

gined would be extremely glad to see me: I judged of his sentiments by my own, and preparing myself for a very tender scene, returned to his lodgings with all diligence at the hour prescribed. "You are come in the very nick of time (said his valet) for my master is just going out; stay here a minute, and I will let him know you are come. So saying he left me in an outward room, and returning in a moment, conducted me into the chamber of his master, whose face had so much of our family air in it, that I was struck with the resemblance, and could not help thinking, it was my very uncle Thomas whom I had left at home. Having saluted him with profound respect, I told him I was the son of master Nicholas de la Fuente, barber in Olmedo: that I had worked at my father's business these three weeks at Madrid, in quality of a journeyman; and that I intended to make the tour of Spain for my improvement. While I spoke, my uncle seemed to muse, considering in all likelihood, whether he would disown me for his nephew, or get rid of me in a more dexterous manner. He chose this last method, and affecting a smiling air, said, "Well, my friend, how do thy father and uncles? I hope they are in good circumstances." Upon this, I began to describe the plentiful propagation of our family: I told him the names of all the children, male and female, and even comprehended in that list their godfathers and godmothers. He did not seem to interest himself infinitely in my detail, but coming to his purpose, he replied, "Diego, I approve very much of thy resolution to travel, in order to make thee perfect in thy profession; and I advise thee to leave Madrid as soon as possible; it is a pernicious place for youth, in which thou wilt be ruined my child: it will be more for thy advantage to reside in some of the other cities of the kingdom, where people's morals are not so much corrupted. Go, (added he) and when thou art ready to set out, come and see me again: I will give thee a pistole to help thee to mak

make the tour of Spain." With these words, he pushed me gently out of his chamber, and sent me about my business. I had not sense enough to perceive that he wanted me to remove at a good distance from him; but going to our shop, gave my master an account of what had passed; he was as far from discovering the intention of Signior Don Pedro as I was, and said, "I am not at all of your uncle's opinion: instead of advising you to travel, he ought rather, I think, make it your interest to stay in this city: for, being intimate with so many persons of quality, he can easily settle you in some great family, and put you in a condition to make your fortune." Struck with this discourse, which flattered my imagination, in two days I went back to my uncle, and proposed, that he should employ his credit to procure admission for me into the family of some lord belonging to court. But this proposal was not at all to his liking: a vain man like him, who had free access to the great, and ate every day at their tables, could not brook his nephew's sitting with the servants, while he dined with their lords; in this case, little Diego would have made Signior Don Pedro blush. He did not fail, therefore, to refuse my request, and that not in the most civil manner. "How! you little vagabond, (said he with a furious look) wouldst thou quit thy profession? go, I abandon thee to those who have given thee such pernicious counsel: get out of my apartment, and never set foot in it again, otherwise I will cause thee to be chastised as thou deservest." Confounded at these words, and still more at the tone in which they were delivered, I retired with the tear in my eye, very much affected at his harsh behaviour; but as I was naturally brisk and haughty, I soon dried my tears; my grief changed to indignation, and I resolved to take no further notice of this unkind relation, without whose assistance I had hitherto made shift to live.



My whole thought being now bent on cultivating my talent, I applied to business, shaved all day long, and in the evening learned to play on the guitar, by way of recreation. My master for that instrument was an old Signior Escudero \*, whose beard I trimmed, and who taught me music, which he understood perfectly well, having been formerly quiremaster in a cathedral. His name was Marcos de Obregon, a sage person, who had a large stock of sense, as well as experience, and loved me as well as if I had been his own child. He served in quality of usher to a physician's wife, who lived within thirty paces of our house, whither I used to go in the twilight, when we had left off working: and sitting together on the threshold of the door, we used to make a little concert, not at all disagreeable to the neighbours: not that our voices were exquisite, but while we thrummed upon the instrument, each of us, in our turn accompanied it with singing, and that was sufficient to please our audience. In particular we diverted Donna Mergellina, the physician's wife, who used to come into the passage to hear us, and sometimes made us repeat the airs that were most to her liking, her husband not being offended at her enjoying this diversion: for though he was a Spaniard, and already well stricken in years, he was not jealous: his profession engrossed him wholly, and as he returned fatigued from his patients in the evening, he went to bed betimes, without being alarmed at his wife's attention to our concerts: 'tis probable indeed, that he did not think them capable of making dangerous impressions; and we must observe, that he imagined he had little or no cause to fear: Mergellina being young and handsome, 'tis true, but withal so savagely virtuous, that she could not so much as endure the look of a man. He did not therefore begrudge her a pastime that seemed so innocent and honourable, but left us to sing as

\* Escudero: a squire to wait on a gentlewoman.

much as we pleased. One evening when I came to the physician's door, with an intention to play as usual, I found the old 'squire expecting me, who taking me by the hand, said he wanted to take a turn with me, before we should begin our concert; then leading me into a by-street, where we found we could talk with freedom, "Son Diego, (said he with a melancholy air) I have something extraordinary to disclose: I am afraid, my child, that we both shall have cause to repent of amusing ourselves in the evening, with concerts at my master's door. I have, doubtless, a great friendship for you, and am very well pleased with having taught you to play upon the guitar, and sing; but had I foreseen the misfortune that threatens us, please God! I would have given you your lessons in some other place!" Frightened at this discourse, I begged the usher to be more explicit, and tell me what we had to fear; for I was not a man who could brave danger; nor had I as yet made the tour of Spain. "I will (said he) tell you what is necessary to be known, that you may comprehend the jeopardy in which we are. When I entered into the service of the physician, which is about a year ago, he said to me one morning, after having brought me into the presence of his wife, "Marcos, behold your mistress; this is the lady whom you are to attend every where." I admired Donna Mergellina, I thought her wonderfully pretty, excessively handsome, and was particularly charmed with the agreeable air that diffused itself through her whole mien: "Sir (answered I to the physician) I am too happy in being permitted to serve such a charming lady." Mergellina, disgusted at my answer, said in a passion, "A pretty fellow, indeed! methinks you take a great deal of liberty.—I want none of your compliments—not I." Such words from a mouth so agreeable surprized me very much; I could not reconcile this rustic and insolent manner of speaking with the gentle appearance of my mistress: but her husband,



husband, who was used to it, rejoiced at his having a wife of such rare character, told me that his wife was a prodigy of virtue; and perceiving that she put on her veil, and prepared to go to mass, bade me conduct her to church. We were no sooner in the street than we met (which is not at all extraordinary) several gentlemen, who, struck with the fine air of Donna Mergellina, paid her a great many compliments, en passant. She replied to them all: but you cannot imagine how silly and ridiculous her answers were. Every body was astonished, and could not conceive that there was a woman in the world who could be displeased with praise. "Madam, (said I to her) take no notice of what is said to you; it is better to keep silence than to speak in a passion." "No, no, (answered she) I will let these insolent fellows know that I won't be treated with disrespect." In short, so much impertinence escaped her, that I could not help telling her my sentiments, at the hazard of her displeasure. I represented to her, as delicately as I could, that she perverted nature, and spoiled a thousand good qualities by her savage humour; that a woman of politeness and good-nature might inspire love, without the help of beauty; whereas, the handsomest person in the world, without meekness and good-breeding, would become the object of contempt. I strengthened these arguments with many more of the same kind, calculated for the reformation of her behaviour; and after having moralized a good deal, I was afraid that my freedom would enrage my mistress, and bring upon me some severe repartee: nevertheless, she did not rebel against my remonstrance, but contented herself with neglecting it entirely, as well as all the rest that I was afterwards foolish enough to make.

At length I forbore to advertize her of her faults, and abandoned her to the ferocity of her nature. Mean while, (would you believe it?) this ferocious disposition, this haughty woman is within these two

months entirely changed; she is complaisant to every body, and her behaviour most agreeable; she is not the same Mergellina who made such silly answers to the men who said obliging things to her; she is become sensible to praise; loves to be called handsome, and told that a man can not look upon her with impunity; and flattery is as agreeable to her as to any other woman; the change is scarce credible; and what will surprize you still more, you are the author of such a great miracle! Yes my dear Diego, (continued the usher) you have metamorphosed Donna Mergellina in this manner, and converted that tigress into a lamb. In one word, you have attracted her notice: I have perceived it more than once, and I am very much mistaken in the sex if she has not conceived a most violent passion for you. This, my child, is the sad piece of news I had to disclose, and the troublesome dilemma in which we are."

"I can't see (said I to the old man) that we have so much cause to be afflicted at this affair, or that it is a misfortune for me to be beloved by a handsome lady." "Ah, Diego! (he replied) you talk like a young man: you look only at the bait, without perceiving the hook; you consider only the pleasure, but I foresee the disagreeable consequences. All will come to light in the end. If you continue coming to sing at our door, you will inflame the passion of Mergellina, who, perhaps, losing all restraint, will betray her weakness before her husband doctor Oloroso; and he, who appears so complaisant at present, because he believes he has no reason to be jealous, will become furious, revenge himself upon her, and, in all probability, make both you and me feel the effects of his rage." "Why truly (said I) Signior Marcos, your reasons are convincing, and I submit myself wholly to your advice: give me, therefore, directions how to behave, in order to prevent mischief." "We have nothing to do (answered he) but to give over our concert; appear no more before my mistress; and when you

you are no longer seen, she will retrieve her quiet. Stay at your master's house, whither I will come, and we will play upon the guitar without danger."

"With all my heart (said I) and I promise never to set foot within your door again." I resolved in good earnest to be as good as my word, and, for the future to keep myself close in the shop, since the sight of me was so dangerous.

In the mean time, honest Marcos, with all his prudence, found, in a very few days, that the means he had contrived to extinguish the flame of Donna Mergellina, produced a quite contrary effect. This lady, not having heard me sing for two nights successively, asked him, why we had discontinued our concert, and for what reason I no longer appeared. He replied, I was so busy that I had not a moment to bestow on my pleasures. She seemed satisfied with this excuse, and for three days more supported my absence with fortitude enough; but at the end of that time my princess lost all patience, and said to her squire, "You deceive me, Marcos; Diego must have some other reason for not coming hither; there is some mystery in it, which I must have explained: speak, therefore, I order you, and conceal nothing of the truth."

"Madam (answered he, making use of another expedient) since you must know the truth, I will tell you, that he commonly found supper over when he went home, after our concert; and he does not chuse to run the risque of going to bed with an empty stomach."

"How! with an empty stomach! (cried she, with marks of uneasiness) why had not you told me this sooner! Go to bed supperless! poor baby! Go to him instantly, and bring him hither this very evening. He shall not go home with an empty stomach: there shall always be a plate of something reserved for him."

"What do I hear? (said the usher, affecting surprise at her discourse) heavens, what a change! is it you, madam, that talk thus? How long have you been thus gentle and compassionate?" "How long!

(replied she, hastily) since your abode in this house; or rather since you condemned my disdainful carriage, and laboured to soften the roughness of my behaviour. But, alas! (added she, in a melting strain) I have passed from one extremity to another! from being haughty and insensible, I am become too soft and tender! I love your young friend Diego, in spite of all my efforts to the contrary; and his absence, instead of weakening, adds new vigour to my love!"

—"Is it possible (said the old man) that a lad who is neither handsome nor genteel, should be the object of such a violent passion? I would forgive your sentiments had they been inspired by some gentleman of shining accomplishments." "Ah! Marcos (said Mergellina, interrupting him) I don't resemble the rest of my sex—or rather, notwithstanding all your long experience, you are but little acquainted with women, if you think that merit always determines their choice. If I may be allowed to judge by myself, deliberation has no share in their engagements: love is a disorder of the mind, by which we are involuntarily dragged and fastened to the object—it is a distemper by which we are seized as dogs are with madness; cease therefore to represent Diego as unworthy of my tenderness: let it suffice that my love finds in him a thousand good qualities which escape your notice, and, perhaps, only exist in my imagination. It is vain for you to tell me, that neither his features nor his make deserve the least attention. He seems to me born to captivate, and fairer than the day! besides, he has a sweetness of voice that charms me, and, in my opinion, plays on the guitar with a grace peculiar to himself." "But, madam (replied Marcos) do you consider who this Diego is? the meanness of his condition?" "Mine is not much higher than his; (said she, interrupting him again) and if I was even a woman of quality, that should be no objection."

The result of this conversation was, that the ushers  
thinking

thinking he should make little progress with his remonstrances, ceased to oppose the infatuation of his mistress; as an expert pilot yields to the storm that drives him from the port in view. He did more for the satisfaction of his patroness; for coming to me he took me aside, and having recounted what passed between her and him; "You see, Diego (added he) that we cannot help continuing our concert at Mergellina's door. There is a necessity for that lady's seeing you again, my friend; otherwise, she will commit some piece of indiscretion, that may do infinite prejudice to her reputation." I was not hard-hearted, but told Marcos, I would in the twilight repair to the place of assignation, with my guitar, and that he might go and regale his mistress with this agreeable piece of news. In this he did not fail; and that passionate innamorata was ravished to understand that she should have the pleasure of seeing and hearing me that very evening.

A disagreeable accident, however, had well-nigh balked her expectation. For I could not leave the shop before night, which, for my sins, was extremely dark: and as I groped along the street, and had got about half way to the place of rendezvous, I was crowned, from a window, with the contents of a perfuming-pan, that did not at all delight my sense of smelling; though I may safely say I lost none of it, so exactly was I equipt. In this condition I did not know what course to take. Had I returned to the shop, I should have afforded a very diverting scene to my comrades, and exposed myself to a thousand unsavory jests; and I was shocked at the thought of going in this fine pickle to Mergellina: this last, however, I resolved upon, and going to the physician's house, found the old squire waiting for me at the door. When he told me that doctor Oloroso being in bed, we might freely divert ourselves; I answered, I must first clean my cloaths; and then related my misfortune: he sympathized with me, and

conducted me into a hall where his mistress was, who no sooner learned my adventure, and saw my condition, than she grieved for me as much as if I had met with the greatest misfortune; and bestowed a thousand curses on the person who had thus accommodated me. "But, madam (said Marcos to her) moderate your transports; and consider that this event, being the pure effect of chance, ought not to be so deeply resented." "Why should not I (answered she) deeply resent the injury that has been done to this poor lamb, this dove without gall, who does not even complain of the outrage he has received? O that I was a man this moment to revenge it!"

She said a thousand things more that denoted the excess of her love, which she made appear no less by her actions; for while Marcos was busied in wiping me with a towel, she ran to her chamber and fetched from it a box full of all sorts of perfumes; sweetening my cloaths with the scent of odoriferous drugs which she burned, and afterwards sprinkling them all over with essences. The fumigation and asperision performed, this charitable lady went herself into the kitchen for some bread, wine, and slices of roasted mutton which she had set apart for my entertainment; and obliging me to eat, took pleasure in serving me, sometimes by cutting my victuals, and sometimes by filling wine; in spite of all that Marcos and I could say to dissuade her from such condescension. When I had supped, we gentlemen of the band began to tune our voices to our guitars, and performed a concert that charmed Mergellina. We affected, indeed, to sing those airs, the words of which flattered her passion; and it must be observed, that while I sung, I frequently ogled her with the tail of my eye, in such a manner, as blew the coals of love; for I began to be pleased with the game. Although the concert lasted a long time, I was not at all tired, and as for the lady, to whom the hours seemed minutes, she would willingly have spent the night in hearing us, had



had not the old usher, to whom the minutes seemed hours, put her in mind of its being late. This she gave him the trouble to repeat ten or twelve times; but she had to do with one who was indefatigable on that subject, and who gave her no rest, until I was gone. This experienced person, seeing his mistress abandoned to a foolish passion, was afraid of some cross accident; and his fear was soon justified: for the doctor either suspecting some secret intrigue, or agitated by the demon of jealousy, who had respected him hitherto, took it in his head to find fault with our concerts, which he forbid in a peremptory manner and, without giving any reason for his disgust, declared that for the future, he would suffer no stranger to come within his doors.

Marcos advertised me of this declaration, which was particularly intended for me, and mortified me not a little; for I had conceived hopes I was sorry to forego. Nevertheless, that I may act the faithful historian, I will own that I bore my misfortune with patience. This was not the case with Mergellina, whose sentiments were more inflamed than ever. "My dear Marcos! (said she to her usher) from you alone I expect assistance: fall upon some method, I beg of you, to bring Diego and me together in private." "What do you ask! cried the old man, in a rage. I have been already but too complaisant; and will not undertake, by gratifying your silly passion, to dishonour my master, ruin your reputation, and intail infamy upon myself; I, who have always maintained the character of an irreproachable domestic! I will rather quit your family than serve you in such a shameful manner." "Ah, Marcos! (cried the lady, interrupting him, and frightened at his last words) you pierce my very heart when you talk of leaving me! Cruel man! are you going to forsake me now, after having reduced me to this condition! Give me back my former pride, and that savageness of disposition which you deprived me

of ! Why do I not still possess these happy defects, which would have preserved my tranquility ; whereas your indiscreet remonstrances have robbed me of the repose I enjoyed ! You have corrupted my morals, by endeavouring to correct them.——But, what do I say ? (added she) wretch that I am ! why do I reproach you unjustly : No, my father, you are not the author of my misfortune, which cruel fate alone decrees ! Don't therefore take notice, I conjure you, of the extravagant discourse that escapes me ! Alas, my passion disorders my understanding ! Have pity on my weakness, you are all my comfort, and if you have any regard for my life, do not refuse your assistance."

At these words, her tears redoubling in such a manner that she could not go on, she covered her face with her handkerchief, and threw herself upon a chair, like a person sinking under affliction. Old Marcos, who was perhaps the best soul of an usher that ever lived, could not resist such a moving sight, which affected him so much, that he even mingled his tears with those of his mistress, and said, with an air of tenderness, " Ah, madam, how bewitching you are ! I am not proof against your sorrow ! My virtue is vanquished, and I promise you my assistance. I am not surprized that love has been able to make you forget your duty, when pity only has severed me from mine." Accordingly, the usher, in spite of his irreproachable conduct, devoted himself very obligingly to the passion of Mergellina, and having come one morning to inform me of what had happened, told me, at parting, that he had already concerted a plan for procuring a secret interview between the lady and me. This re-animated my hope, but, in less than two hours after, I received a piece of very bad news. A journeyman apothecary in the neighbourhood, one of our customers, came in to be shaved, and, while I prepared the lather, said, " Signior Diego, what is the mat-

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ter with your friend, the old squire Marcos de O-  
bregon? Do you know that he is going to leave doc-  
tor Oloroso?" Upon my answering in the negative,  
he resumed, "It is certainly true! he is to be dismis-  
sed this very day: his master and mine have been just  
talking on that subject, while I was by: and to the  
best of my remembrance their conversation was thus:  
Signior Apuntador (said the physician) I have a favour  
to ask; being dissatisfied with an old usher, who has  
served me some time, I want to put my wife under the  
direction of a faithful, severe, and vigilant duenna."  
"I understand you (said my master) you have occasion  
for Dame Melancia, who was my wife's governante,  
and has lived in the family these six weeks that I have  
been a widower. Tho' she is very useful to me in  
house-keeping, I yield her to you, on account of my  
concern of your honour. You may depend upon her  
for the safety of your forehead; she is a jewel of a  
duenna \*, and a very dragon to guard the chastity of  
the female sex: during the whole term of twelve  
years that she was with my wife, who, you know,  
was both young and handsome, I never saw so much  
as the shadow of a gallant in my house. No, faith!  
it was no place for them to play pranks in, and let  
me tell you, the defunct, in the beginning, had a  
strong propensity to coquetry; but Dame Melancia  
soon reclaimed, and inspired her with a taste for vir-  
tue.

In a word, she is a treasure, and you will thank  
me more than once for the present I make of her." The doctor was rejoiced at this encomium, and Sig-  
nior Apuntador and he are agreed, that the duenna  
shall this very day fill the place of the old usher.

This piece of news, which I delivered, and was

\* The duennas are discreet females of approved  
fidelity, to whose care the Spaniards commit the chas-  
tity of their wives and daughters—an office happily  
excluded from this land of virtuous freedom.

certainly true, disturbed the ideas of pleasure with which I had begun again to regale myself ; and Marcos, in the afternoon, confounded them effectually, by confirming the report of the journeyman apothecary. " My dear Diego, (said the honest usher) I am very glad that doctor Oloroso has dismissed me. A circumstance that spares me a great deal of trouble ; for I not only found myself engaged in a bad employment, but likewise under a necessity of contriving tricks and stratagems to bring Mergellina and you together in private. What a dilemma had I brought myself into ! Thank heaven, I am freed from those troublesome cares, and the dangers that attend them. For your part, my son, you ought to console yourself for the loss of a few sweet moments, which might have been followed by numberless sorrows." I relished the reflections of Marcos, because I no longer had any hopes, and thought no more of the affair. I confess, I was not one of those stubborn lovers who are animated by the obstacles in their way : but had I been such an one, Dame Melancia was enough to make me quit my pursuit ; for the character I had heard of that duenna seemed capable of driving any gallant to despair. Nevertheless, in whatever colours she had been painted to me, I learned, two or three days after, that the doctor's wife had either lulled this Argus, or corrupted her fidelity. As I went out to shave one of our neighbours, a decent old woman stopping me in the street, asked if my name was not Diego de la Fuente ? when I answered, Yes. " Well, then said she, you are the person I want. Come this night to Donna Mergellina's door, and make some signal by which you may be known and admitted into the house." " Very well (said I to her) we must first agree upon the signal : I can mimick a cat charmingly and will mew several times." " That's enough, (replied this she-Mercury) I will report your answer. Your servant, Signior Diego, heaven bless you—How handsome you are ! By St. Agnes, if I were but fif-

teen years old, I would not chuse to engage you for others." So saying the officious beldame went away.

You may well think that I was furiously agitated by this message. Adieu the reflection of Marcos! I expected night with the utmost impatience, and when I thought doctor Oloroso might be asleep, went to her door, where I mewed so loud as to be heard at a good distance, and did great honour to the master who taught me such a polite art. In a moment, Mergellina herself having opened the door softly and let me in, shut it again in the same manner; and we went together into the hall where our last concert was held, and which was lighted by a small lamp that glimmered in the chimney: we sat down close by one another for the benefit of conversing more at our ease; and we were both very much affected; with this difference, however, that pleasure alone was the occasion of her emotion; while mine partook a little of fear. My princess in vain assured me, that we had nothing to dread on account of her husband: I was seized with a fit of shivering that disturbed my joy. "Madam (said I to her) how have you been able to deceive the vigilance of your governante? After what I had heard of Dame Melancia, I did not think it possible for you to find means to let me hear from you, much less to give me a personal interview." Donna Mergellina, smiling at my discourse, answered, "You will cease to be surprized at the private opportunity me now enjoy, after I have told you what passed between my duenna and me. When she came first into the family, my husband loaded her with civilities, and said to me, "Mergellina, I commit you to the conduct of this discreet gentlewoman, who is a summary of all the virtues: a mirror which you must always have before your eyes, for your improvement in wisdom: this admirable person governed an apothecary's wife (a friend of mine) twelve years; and that in such an uncommon

uncommon manner, that she became a kind of Saint under her instructions."

This encomium, which the severe look of Dame Melancia did not belie, cost me a world of tears, and threw me into despair. I represented to myself the lectures I must hear from morn to night, and the rebukes I must every day undergo. In short, I expected to be the most unhappy woman in the world; and thinking it needless to be on the reserve, in such a cruel state of expectation, I said to my duenna, with a resolute air (as soon as I found myself alone with her) "You are, doubtless, preparing a great many sufferings for me; but I think proper to advertise you beforehand, that I have not a great deal of patience; and that I will endeavour to give you as many mortifications as I can: in the mean time, I declare that my heart entertains a passion which all your remonstrances shall not impair; so you may take your measures accordingly, and redouble your vigilance; for, I confess, I will spare nothing to deceive it." At these words the grim-faced duenna (who I imagined was about to give me a sample of her office) cleared up her austere countenance, and said with a smiling air, "I am charmed with your humour, your frankness encourages mine, and I see we are designed for one another: ah my fair Mergellina! how little are you acquainted with me when you judge by the character your spouse the doctor gives me, and by this sour aspect I assume! I am so far from being an enemy to pleasure, that my sole motive for hiring myself as the minister of jealous husbands, is, that I may the more effectually serve their handsome wives. I have long possessed the great mystery of disguising myself; and I may call myself doubly happy, because I enjoy the convenience of sin, and the reputation of virtue at the same time. Between you and me, this is the scope of mankind in general: virtue itself is too difficult to be acquired; and therefore people are satisfied with possessing the appearance of it."

Leave

Leave your conduct to my direction (added the governante) and I warrant you, we will soon impose upon the old doctor Oloroso, who by my troth, shall soon share the fate of Signior Apuntador; for I don't see why the forehead of a physician should be more respected than that of an apothecary. Poor Apuntador! how many tricks his wife and I have played him! she was a lovely creature! a good-humoured soul, heaven rest it! I can assure you she made a good use of her youth; and did not want abundance of admirers, whom I introduced to the house without ever being discovered by her husband: look upon me therefore, madam, with a more favourable eye, and be persuaded, that whatever talent the old squire might have for your service, you will lose nothing by the change, and perhaps still find me more useful than he was.

I leave you to judge Diego (continued Mergellina) how much I thought myself obliged to the duenna, for this frank declaration: for I looked upon her as a person of the most austere virtue; so apt are people to be deceived in women. Her sincerity gained my heart in a moment; I embraced her in a transport of joy, that convinced her how much I was charmed with my lot, in having her for a governante; and afterwards freely imparted my sentiments to her, and begged that she would, without loss of time, contrive a private meeting with you, which she has not failed to procure. This very morning she set at work that old woman who spoke to you, and who is an agent whom she often employed for the apothecary's wife. But the most pleasant part of this adventure (added she laughing) is, that Melancia, understanding from me that my husband commonly sleeps sound, has gone to bed to him, and this very minute supplies my place. "So much the worse madam (said I to Mergellina) I cannot approve of this invention; your husband may wake and perceive the cheat."—He cannot perceive it (answered she with some precipitation); don't be uneasy on that score; nor let a groundless panic poison the

the delight you ought to enjoy with a young lady who has a regard for you."

The old doctor's wife, observing that I was still dismayed, notwithstanding her assurance, did every thing in her power to encourage me; and practised so many different endeavours for that purpose, that she succeeded at last, and I resolved to profit by the occasion: but just as Cupid, attended by the sports and smiles, was about to crown my happiness, we were astonished by a loud rap at the street-door. Immediately love and his train took wing, like a flock of fearful birds dispersed by sudden noise!—Mergellina concealed me in a hurry under a table that was in the hall; then blowing out the lamp, as it had been agreed upon between her governante and her, in case such a cross accident should happen, she went to the chamber where her husband was a-bed. In the mean time the whole house rung with the repeated knocks that were thundered at the door; and the doctor, starting out of his sleep, called Melancia.—The duenna, jumping out of bed (although the doctor, who mistook her for his wife, bid her lie still) joined her mistress in the dark, who feeling her, called Melancia also, and bid her go and see who knocked at the door: "Madam (answered the governante) I am here.—Go to bed again, if you please, and I will go and see what is the matter." Mean while Mergellina, having undressed, slipped into bed to the doctor, who had not the least suspicion of the trick.—'Tis true indeed, this scene was performed in the dark by two actresses, one of whom was matchless in her way, and the other an admirable proficient.

The duenna, wrapt in a robe de chambre appearing soon after with a candle in her hand, said to her master, "Signior Doctor, be so good as to rise; the bookseller, Fernandez de Buendia, our neighbour, has fallen into an apoplexy, and you are desired to go with all haste to his assistance." The physician dressed himself as soon as he could and went away, while his wife in a loose gown came along with the duenna



duenna into the hall where I was, and drawing me from under the table, more dead than alive, "You have nothing to fear, Diego (said she) recollect yourself." Then in a few words she told me what had happened, and wanted to renew the conversation which had been interrupted; but this the governante opposed, saying, "Madam, perhaps your husband will find the bookseller dead, and return immediately; besides (added she, perceiving me benumbed with fear) what would you do with the poor lad? He is in no condition to maintain the conference, which you had better defer till to-morrow."—Donna Mergellina consented to this proposal, not without regret, so well did she love the present time; and I believe she was very much mortified that she could not then bestow upon the doctor the new cap she had destined for him.

As for my own part, less sorry for having been baulked of love's most precious favours, than glad to be out of danger, I went back to my master's house, where I spent the night in reflecting upon my adventure.—I hesitated some time about going to the place of rendezvous next night, having as bad an opinion of this second enterprize as of the first: but the devil, who is always laying close siege to us, or rather on such occasions takes possession of our faculties, suggested that I should be a great booby to stop short in the middle of such a delightful journey, represented to my fancy Mergellina adorned with new charms, and heightened the value of the pleasures that awaited me! so that I resolved to pursue my point; and flattering myself with the hope of behaving with more courage than before, I repaired in this disposition to the doctor's door, between eleven and twelve next night, which was so dark, that not one star appeared in the firmament. I mewed two or three times, to give notice that I was in the street; and nobody coming to the door, I not only repeated the signal, but also mimicked all the different expressions



sions of a cat, which a shepherd of Olmedo had taught me; and acquitted myself so well, that a neighbour going home, and mistaking me for one of those animals whose notes I imitated, took up a flint-stone he found at his feet, and threw it at me with his whole strength, saying, "Curse on the caterwauler!" I received the blow upon my head, which stunned me so much, that I had well nigh tumbled backwards. I felt myself wounded, a circumstance sufficient to give me a disgust at gallantry; and losing my love with my blood, returned to our house, where I alarmed and raised the whole family. My master examined and dressed my wound, which he thought dangerous; but it was attended with no bad consequence, and in three weeks disappeared. During all that time I heard not one syllable about Mergellina; and it is not unlikely that Dame Melancia, in order to detach her from me, introduced her to some better acquaintance. But this gave me no concern; for as soon as I found myself perfectly cured, I left Madrid, in order to perform my tour of Spain.

#### C H A P. VIII.

*Gil Blas and his companion come up with a man, whom they perceive soaking crusts of bread in a spring; and enter into conversation with him.*

**S**IGNIOR Diego de la Fuente recounted a good many more adventures that had happened to him; but in my opinion, so little worth the breath they cost, that I shall pass them over in silence; though I was obliged to hear the recital, which was so tedious that it brought us as far as Ponte de Duera. In this village we staid the remaining part of the day; and at the inn where we lodged, ordered for supper a dish of cabbage soupe, and a roasted hare, the species of which we were at great pains to prove before hand. On the morrow at break of day we pursued our journey, after having replenished our bottle with  
pretty

pretty good wine, and furnished our knapsack with some slices of bread, and the half of the hare which remained from our supper.

When we had gone about two leagues we began to be hungry; and perceiving several large trees, which formed an agreeable shade in the fields, about two hundred paces from the highway, we went thither to make a halt, and found a man, seven or eight and twenty years old, soaking some crusts in a fountain. A long sword lay by him on the grass, with an havresack, of which he had unloaded his shoulders; and though he was poorly cloathed, he discovered a good shape and mien.—We accosted him in a civil manner, upon which he saluted us with great complaisance; and presenting his crusts, asked with a smile if we would be of his mess; we answered, yes, provided he would give us leave to improve the repast, by joining our breakfast with his. He freely consenting, we immediately produced our victuals, which afforded no unpleasing view to the stranger, who cried in a transport of joy, “How, gentlemen, egad, there’s store of munition for the belly! I see you are provident people: for my own part I seldom travel so well provided, but depend a good deal upon chance. Notwithstanding my present situation, however, I may say without vanity, that I sometimes make a pretty brilliant appearance.—You must know that I am usually treated like a prince, and have guards in my train.” “I understand you, said Diego; you would intimate that you are a player.” “You have hit it, (replied the other) I have acted these fifteen years at least; for I performed some small parts while I was yet a child.” “To be plain with you, said the barber, shaking his head, I can scarce believe what you say.—I know what sort of people the comedians are; these gentlemen do not travel a foot, and dine with St. Anthony, as you do; therefore I cannot help thinking that you are no more than a candle snuffer.” “You may think of me as you please, replied

replied the stage-player; but I affirm that I act the very top parts, among the rest that of the lover"—  
“If that be the case, said my comrade, I congratulate you upon it; and am very proud that Signior Gil Blas and I have the honour to breakfast with a person of such importance.”

We then began to gnaw our crusts, and the precious remains of the hare, bestowing such rude embraces on the bottle that it was empty in a very short time; and being so busy with what we were about, that we scarce spoke one word during the repast; which being ended, the conversation was thus resumed: “I am surprized, said the barber to the player, to see you in such indifferent circumstances: for a stage hero, methinks you have a very needy appearance; you’ll pardon my freedom.” “Your freedom! (cried the actor) ah! truly, you are little acquainted with Melchior Zapata. Thank heaven, I am not at all exceptionous; you do me a pleasure in speaking so frankly; for I myself love to tell my mind without reserve.—I sincerely own I am not rich.—Look, added he, shewing that his doublet was lined with play-bills, this is the stuff that usually serves me for lining; and if you have any curiosity to see my wardrobe, it shall be forthwith gratified.” At the same time he took out of his knapsack an old suit laced with tinsel, a sorry hat with some old plumes of feathers, a pair of silk stockings full of holes, and red buskins very much worn. “You see, said he, I am tolerably poor.”—“That’s what surprizes me, replied Diego. So you have neither wife nor daughter?” “I have a wife, young and handsome, said Zapata; yet I am never a bit the better for it, so wonderfully capricious is my fate. I married a beautiful actress, in hopes that she would not let me starve; and, unfortunately for me, she is incorruptibly chaste. Who the devil would not have been deceived, as I was? there happened to be one virtuous woman among the strollers, and she must fall to my lot!”

lot!" "Truly, you have had bad luck (said the barber): but why did not you marry an actress of the king's company at Madrid, in which case you could not have been disappointed?" "I grant it, replied the player; but, a plague upon it, a little country-stroller dares not aspire to those famous heroines: this is as much as an actor of the prince's company can do; some of whom are even obliged to match in the city.—Luckily for them, the city is well stored, and they often light on yoke-fellows not a whit inferior to those princesses who were brought up behind the scenes."

"Have you never endeavoured, (said my companion to him) to be introduced into that company? Must one have infinite merit to be admitted into it?"

—"Good! replied Melchior, you are merry with your infinite merit.—It is composed of twenty actors; ask their characters in town, and you will hear them finely handled. More than one half deserve to carry the knapsack still; but, for all that, it is no easy matter to be received among them. One must have money, or powerful friends, to supply the want of talent.—This I ought to know, since I am just come from making a trial at Madrid, where I have been hooted and hissed in a hellish manner, although I deserved to be applauded to the skies; for I roared, ranted, burlesqued nature an hundred times; and moreover, in my declamation, clapped my clenched fist to my princess's nose.—In a word, I performed in the taste of the great actors in vogue; and yet the same audience that relished this behaviour in them, could not endure it in me.—You see the force of prejudice! wherefore, finding myself incapable of pleasing on that stage, and having nothing to secure my reception in defiance of the town, I am going back to Zamora, where I shall rejoin my wife and comrades, who are not in the most flourishing circumstances. God grant that we may not be obliged to beg

beg our way to the next town; a misfortune which has already happened to us more than once.

With these words this prince of the drama sprang up, shouldered his knapsack, girded on his sword, and, at parting, pronounced with a theatrical air, "Gentlemen, adieu! may the gods exhaust their bounties on you." "And you, replied Diego! may you, at your return to Zamora, behold your wife's condition and temper changed." Signior Zapata no sooner shewed his heels than he began to rehearse as he walked, and immediately the barber and I hissed; to put him in mind of his trial: the noise reaching his ears, he thought he still heard the cat-calls of Madrid; upon which he looked back, and perceiving that we made merry at his expence, far from being incensed at our buffoonry, took all in good part, and continued his noise, bursting into fits of laughter all the way. We returned his mirth with all our might; and getting back into the high road, pursued our journey.

## CHAP. IX.

*The condition in which Diego finds his family; and an account of the rejoicings; after which Gil Blas bids him farewell.*

HAVING slept that night between Moyados and Valpuesta, in a little village whose name I have forgot, we arrived next day, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, in the plain of Olmedo. "Signior Gil Blas, said my comrade, there is the place of my nativity, which I cannot behold again without transport; so natural is it to love one's country." "Signior Diego, answered I, one who expresses such regard for his native country, might, I think, have spoke of it a little more advantageously than you have done: Olmedo seems to be a city, and you told me it was only a village. It ought, at least to be dignified with the epithet of a market-town."—I beg its pardon, replied the

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the barber; but I must own, that after having seen Madrid, Toledo, Saragossa, and all the great cities I touched at in making my tour of Spain, I look upon the small ones as villages." As we advanced into the plain, we thought we observed a great concourse of people near Olmedo; and when we were near enough to discern objects, we found something to attract our attention.

There were three tents pitched at a small distance from one another, and hard by a great number of cooks and scullions preparing a feast: some laid the cloths on long tables placed under the tents: some filled earthen pitchers with wine: others made the pots boil, and others again turned spits that were loaded with all sorts of meat: but what I considered more attentively than all the rest, was a great stage, raised and adorned with decorations of painted paper of different colours, and garnished with Greek and Latin devices. The barber no sooner perceived the inscriptions, than he said, "All these Greek mottos favour strongly of my uncle Thomas, who, I'll hold a wager, has a hand in the business; for, between you and me, he is a learned man, and has a power of college books by heart: his greatest fault is, that he incessantly quotes passages from them in conversation, which is not agreeable to every body. Besides (added he) my uncle has translated a good many Greek and Latin authors, and is quite master of the ancients, as one may see by the learned remarks which he has made: had it not been for him we should never have known, that in the city of Athens children cried when they were flogged: we owe that discovery to his profound erudition."

After my comrade and I had observed all those things which I have mentioned, we were curious to know the cause of such preparations, and went forward to enquire, when Diego recognized in the director of the feast, Signior Thomas de la Fuente, whom he accosted with great eagerness. The schoolmaster  
did



did not, at first, know the young barber; so much was he altered during an absence of ten years: but recollecting him at last, he embraced him affectionately, saying, "What! do I see thee then, Diego, my dear nephew! Do I see thee returned to the town where thou first saw'st the light? Thou art come to revisit thy household gods; and heaven restore thee safe and sound to thy kindred! O day, thrice and four times happy! O day, worthy to be marked with a white stone! A world of changes have happen'd, my friend (pursued he): thy uncle Pedro, the poet, has fallen a victim to Pluto, having died three months ago. That miser, while alive, was afraid of wanting the necessaries of life. *Argenti pallebat amore*. For tho' he received large pensions from several grandees, he did not spend ten pistoles a year for his subsistence: and was even served by a valet whom he did not maintain. That fool, more senseless than the Grecian Aristippus, who ordered his slaves to throw away, in the deserts of Afric, the riches they carried as a burthen that incommoded them in their march;—he, I say, heap'd up all the gold and silver he could scrape together; and for whom? for those very heirs he would not so much as see. He died worth thirty thousand ducats, which thy father, thy uncle Bertrand, and I, have equally shared among us; so that we are able to settle our children to our heart's desire. My brother Nicholas has already disposed of thy sister Theresa, whom he has given in marriage to the son of one of our alcades. *Connubio junxit stabili, propriumque dicavit*. These nuptials, performed under the most happy auspices, we have celebrated these two days with such preparation; three tents being pitch'd in the plain, one for each of the three heirs of Pedro, who, in their turns, bear the expence of the day. I wish thou had'st arrived sooner, to have seen the beginning of our rejoicings. The day before yesterday, when they were married, thy father gave a sumptuous entertainment, which was followed by a course

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at the ring, thy uncle the mercer treated yesterday, and regaled us with a pastoral feast; ten of the gentlest youths, and as many handsome maidens, were dressed like shepherds, all the ribbons and points in his shop being employed to adorn them. — This gay company performed several dances, and sung a thousand light and tender catches: nevertheless though nothing was ever more gallant, the spectators did not seem to relish it, which shews that pastoral is quite out of date.

“To-day (added he) every thing is to be at my cost, and I will exhibit to the inhabitants of Olmedo a shew of my own invention. *Finis coronabit opus*. I have ordered a theatre to be raised, on which (God willing) I will make my scholars represent a piece of my own composing, intituled, *The Deversions of Muley Bugentuf, King of Morocco*. It will be extremely well acted, because I have scholars who declaim like the players of Madrid: they are the sons of fashionable people living at Pennafiel and Segovia, who are boarded with me, and are become excellent actors under my instruction. Their performance will appear to be of a masterly stamp, *ut ita dicam*. With regard to the piece I shall say nothing, that thou may’st enjoy the pleasure of surprize; but only observe that it must transport the spectators: for it is one of those tragic subjects which awake the soul by the images of death then present to the view. — I am of Aristotle’s opinion, that the chief end of tragedy is to raise terror. Oh! if I had attached myself to the drama, I would have introduced none but bloody-minded princes and heroic assassins on the scene, and would have bathed myself in gore: and in my tragedies, not only the principal persons, but even their guards should have perished. — I would have murdered them all, to the prompter. In a word, my taste is horror; and we see that such poems captivate the multitude, support the luxury of the players, and enable the author to live at his ease.”

Just as he had done speaking, we saw coming out of the village into the plain a great concourse of men and women. These were no other than the new-married couple, accompanied by their relations and friends, and preceded by ten or twelve musicians, who, playing all together, performed a most thundering concert. We went up to meet them, and Diego made himself known; upon which the whole assembly broke out into shouts of joy, and every one was eager to embrace him; so that he was sufficiently employed in receiving their expressions of friendship. His whole family, as well as all who were present, having well nigh smothered him with caresses, his father said to him, "Welcome, Diego; thou findest thy parents somewhat bettered in their circumstances, my child. I shall say no more at present, but explain myself more particularly by and by." Mean while the company, advancing into the plain, repaired to the tents, and sat down at the tables that were covered; and I and my companion, whom I would not quit, dined with the bridegroom and bride, who seemed to be very well matched. The repast was pretty long, because the school-master had the vanity to furnish three courses, in order to excel his brothers, who had not treated with such magnificence.

After the banquet, all the guests expressed impatience to see the representation of Signior Thomas's piece, not doubting (as they said) that the production of such a fine genius would answer their most sanguine expectation. Accordingly approaching the stage, before which the musicians had already taken their seats, in order to play between the acts, every body, in the most profound silence, waited for the beginning. The actors appeared on the scene, and the author, with his poem in his hand, sat down on one side, to prompt them. It was not without reason that he told us the piece was tragical; for, in the first act, the king of Morocco, by way of recreation, shot an hundred Moorish slaves with arrows: in the second, he be-

headed

headed thirty Portuguese officers, whom one of his captains had made prisoners of war: and in the third and last, this monarch, mad with his wives, sets fire with his own hand to a detached palace, in which they were shut up, and reduces them and it to ashes. The Moorish slaves, as well as the Portuguese officers, were figures of ozier, very artfully made; and the palace, composed of paper, seemed all in flames by an artificial firework. This conflagration, accompanied with a thousand doleful shrieks, that seemed to issue from the midst of the flames, concluded the piece, and closed the scene in a very diverting manner. The whole plain echoed with the applause that was given to such a fine tragedy, which justified the good taste of the poet, and shewed that he knew how to chuse his subject.

I thought there was no more to be seen, after the diversions of Muley Bugentuf; but I was mistaken: for we were advertised of a new shew by the sound of drums and trumpets. This was a distribution of prizes; Thomas de la Fuente, to make the feast more solemn, having ordered all his scholars, as well those who were boarded with him as the rest, to compose, and intending to bestow on those who had succeeded best, books bought at Segovia with his coin. Immediately therefore two school-forms were brought upon the stage, with a press full of little books handsomely bound: then all the actors returned upon the scene, and ranged themselves round Signior Thomas, who looked as big as the head master of a college, and held a paper in his hand, on which were written the names of those who were to obtain the prizes: this he gave to the king of Morocco, who began to read it with a loud voice; and every scholar who was called, going in a respectful manner, receiving a book from the pedant, was afterwards crowned with bays, and ordered to sit down on one of the benches, that he might be exposed to the admiration of the crowd. Nevertheless, how desirous

soever the school-master was of sending home the spectators satisfied, he could by no means effect it; because having distributed almost all the prizes among his boarders, as the custom is, the mothers of some of the rest, being present, were offended; and openly accused the pedant of partiality, in such a manner, that this entertainment, which had hitherto been so glorious for him, was like to have ended in mischief, like the feast of the Lapithæ.

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### B O O K III.

#### C H A P. I.

*The arrival of Gil Blas at Madrid; with an account of the first master whom he served in that city.*

**H**AVING staid some time with the young barber, I afterwards joined a merchant of Segovia, in his way through Olmedo, with four mules, on which he had transported goods to Valladolid, and was returning with them unloaded. We became acquainted on the road, and he conceived such a friendship for me, that he insisted upon my lodging at his house when we arrived at Segovia. There he detained me two days; and when I was ready to set out for Madrid along with a carrier, he intrusted me with a letter, which he desired I would in person deliver, according to the direction, without telling me that it was a recommendation. I did not fail to present it to Signior Mattheo-Melendez, a woollen-draper, who lived near the Sun-gate of the corner of the Trunkmaker's-street; he no sooner opened it and read the contents, than he said, with a complaisant air, "Signior Gil Blas, Pedro Palacio, my correspondent, writes so pressingly in your behalf, that I cannot dispense with your lodging at my house. He moreover intreats

me

me to find a place for you; and I undertake the office with pleasure, being persuaded that I shall find no difficulty in procuring for you a good settlement."

I accepted the offer of Melendez with so much the more joy, as my finances were sensibly diminished; but I did not live long at his expence; for in eight days he gave me to know, that he had recommended me to a gentleman of his acquaintance, who wanted a valet de chambre; and that, in all probability, I would be preferred to the post. The gentleman coming in at that moment, "Signior, (said Melendez, shewing me to him) this is the young man I mentioned to you. He is a youth of honour and sobriety, and I can answer for his good behaviour as much as for my own." The cavalier having looked at me attentively, said he liked my countenance, and took me into his service. "He may follow me now, (added he) and I will instruct him in his duty." At these words he bid the merchant good-morrow, and conducting me into the great street just by St. Philip's church, we entered a pretty good house, one wing of which he possessed; and going up five or six steps of a stair, he introduced me into a chamber, secured by two strong doors, which he opened, and in the first I perceived a small window, grated with iron: through this chamber we went into another, where there was a bed and other furniture, more calculated for convenience than shew.

If my new master considered me attentively at the house of Melendez, I examined him with great earnestness in my turn. He was a man turned of fifty, seemed to be serious and reserved, though good-natured withal; so that I conceived no bad opinion of him. He put several questions to me about my family, and being satisfied with my answers, "Gil Blas (said he) I believe thou art a sensible young fellow, and I am very glad to have such an one in my service. As for thee, thou shalt have no cause to complain: I will give thee six rials a-day for victuals,

cloaths, wages and all, exclusive of some little perquisites thou may'st enjoy; and I am easily served, for I keep no table, but always dine abroad.—All that thou hast to do in a morning is to clean my cloaths, and thou shalt be at thy own disposal during the rest of the day: take care only to come back early in the evening, and wait for me at the door. This is all I exact." After having thus prescribed my duty, he took out his purse and gave me six rials, as a beginning to fulfil articles; then going out, he locked the doors himself, and putting the keys in his pocket, "Friend (said he) don't follow me: go where you please; but be sure to be on the stair when I return in the evening." So saying, he left me to dispose of myself as I should think proper.

"In good faith, Gil Blas (said I to myself) thou couldst not have found a better master: what! to light on a man, who, for brushing his cloaths, and helping him to dress of a morning, gives me six rials per day, with liberty to walk and take my diversion, like a scholar during the vacance! Egad, this is the happiest of all situations! No wonder that I was so desirous of being at Madrid; I certainly had some supernatural intimation of the happiness that awaited me." I spent the day in strolling about the streets, diverting myself with looking at every thing that was new to me, and this gave me sufficient employment. In the evening, after having supp'd at an eating-house not far from our lodgings, I betook myself to the place whither my master had ordered me to repair, and where he himself arrived three quarters of an hour after me, seemingly well pleased with my punctuality. "Very well (said he) this is right: I love to see servants attentive to their duty." So saying, he open'd the doors of his apartment, and shut them again as soon as we had got in: being in the dark, he took a tinder-box and struck a light, by the help of which I assisted to undress him. When he was a-bed, I lighted by his order a lamp that stood in his chimney;



chimney, and carried the candle into the anti-chamber, where I went to sleep in a bed without curtains. Next morning he got up between nine and ten o'clock, and, when I had dusted his cloaths, counted me six more rials, and dismiss'd me till the evening : after which he went out also, not without locking his doors with great care ; so we parted again for the remaining part of the day.

Such was our manner of living, which I found very agreeable ; and the best joke of all was, I did not know my master's name : Melendez himself was ignorant of it, being only acquainted with him as a gentleman who came sometimes to his shop, and bought cloth of him as he had occasion for it. Our neighbours could give me no better information ; all of them assuring me that my master was utterly unknown to them, although he had lived two years in the ward. They told me that he visited no body in the neighbourhood ; and some of them, accustomed to make rash inferences, concluded from thence that he was no better than he should be. They went still farther, suspected him to be a spy of the king of Portugal, and charitably advertised me of the suspicion, that I might take my measures accordingly. I was disturbed at this advice ; and reflected, that if the thing was so, I should run the risk of visiting the prison of Madrid. I could not confide in my innocence, my past misfortunes having taught me to dread justice ; for I had found by experience, that if she does not put the innocent to death, she at least treats them with so little hospitality, that her lodgers are always in a very melancholy situation.

In such a delicate conjuncture I consulted Melendez, who did not know how to advise me ; for if he could not believe that my master was a spy, on the other hand, he had no certain reason to think otherwise : so that I resolved to observe my patron narrowly, and to leave him, if I should perceive that he was undoubtedly an enemy to the state ; but I thought



prudence, and the easiness of my place, required that I should be first perfectly sure of his practices. With this view I began to keep a strict eye over his actions; and in order to sound him, "Sir (said I one evening, while I undressed him) one does not know how to live, so as to avoid slander: the world is very malicious, and we, among others, are very little obliged to our neighbours. You cannot guess in what manner the malicious creatures talk of us."—"Right, Gil Blas (answered he): but what can they say of us, child?" "Ah! truly (I replied) scandal never wants matter. Virtue herself furnishes food for it. Our neighbours say that we are dangerous people, and deserve to be taken notice of by the government. In a word, you are thought to be a spy for the king of Portugal." While I pronounced these words, I looked hard at my master, as Alexander \* eyed his physician; and employing all my penetration to discover what effect my report produced in him, thought I observed an emotion that too well agreed with the conjectures of the neighbourhood, and he fell into a fit of musing, upon which I did not put the most favourable construction: but he soon recovered himself, and said with an air of tranquillity, "Gil Blas, let our neighbours think as they please, without making our peace depend on their imaginations; and since we give them no cause to think amiss of us, let their opinion give us no uneasiness."

Upon this he went to bed; and I followed his example, without knowing what to think of the matter. Next day, just as we were going out in the morning,

\* Alexander the Great having received a letter, intimating that his physician intended to poison him, took the cup of medicine which he prescribed; and swallowing it without hesitation, put the letter into the suspected person's hand, fixing his eyes stedfastly upon him while he read it, in order to distinguish in his countenance the signs of innocence or guilt.

we heard a loud rap at the outward door : my master opened the other, and looking through the small grate, saw a decent sort of a man at it, who said, " Signior cavalier, I am an Alguazil, and come hither to tell you that the corregidor would speak with you." " What does he want with me ?" (replied my patron). " That I am ignorant of, Signior, said the Alguazil ; but if you will take the trouble to go to his house, you will soon know." " I am his most humble servant, resumed my master ; but have no manner of business with him." So saying, he shut the second door ; and having walked up and down for some time, like one alarmed at the discourse of the Alguazil, put six rials into my hand, saying, " Gil Blas, thou may'st go out, my friend. I do not intend to go abroad so early, and have no further occasion for thee this morning." These words made me believe, that the fear of being apprehended obliged him to stay at home : so that when I left him, in order to see if my suspicions were unjust, I hid myself in a place from whence I could see him, if he should come out ; and should have had the patience to stay there the whole morning, had he not spared me that trouble. But an hour after, I saw him walking in the street with an air of assurance, that at first confounded my penetration ; but, far from being duped by those appearances, I distrusted them, having no favourable opinion of the man. I looked upon his composure as a piece of affectation, and even imagined that his remaining at home was with a view of securing his gold and jewels ; and that, in all probability, he would consult his safety by immediate flight. I did not expect to see him again, and hesitated about going in the evening to give my attendance at the door ; so sure I was that he would quit the city instantly, to escape from the danger that threatened him. I did not fail, however, of being there ; and, to my utter surprize, my master returned at his usual time, went to bed without shewing the

least uneasiness, and got up next day with the same tranquillity.

When we had done dressing, somebody knocked at the door; upon which, my master looking through the grate, perceived the same Alguazil who had been there the preceeding day, and asked what he wanted? "Open (answered the Alguazil) here is monsieur the corregidor." At this formidable name, my blood froze in my veins, for I was curfedly afraid of these gentlemen since I had passed through their hands; and wished that moment to be an hundred leagues from Madrid: but my patron, less afraid than I, opened the door, and received the judge with great respect. "You see, (said the corregidor to him) I do not come to your lodgings with many attendants, being desirous of doing every thing with as little noise as possible: and believe that you deserve this respect, notwithstanding the ugly reports that are spread of you. Tell me, therefore, your name and business at Madrid." "Signior (replied my master) I was born in New Castile, and my name is Don Barnard de Castel Blazo: with regard to my business, I divert myself in walking, frequenting shews and enjoying the agreeable conversation of a few select friends." "Doubtless (said the judge) you have a great income." "No, Sir, (resumed my patron, interrupting him) I have neither rents, lands, nor house." "How do you live then? (replied the corregidor) "On that which you shall see" (said Don Barnard)—at the same time he lifted up a hanging, opened a door which I had not before observed, then another behind that, and carried the judge into a closet, where he shewed him a great trunk filled with pieces of gold.

Then he went on; "Signior, you know that the Spauiards are enemies to work: nevertheless, how averse soever they may be to trouble, I may safely say that I excel them all in that particular, having a fund of laziness that renders me incapable of any manner of employment, If I had a mind to dignify my vices,  
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I would call this laziness a philosophical indolence, the work of a mind weaned from every thing that is most ardently pursued in life. But I will frankly own that I am constitutionally idle: and so idle, that if I was under a necessity of working for my livelihood, I believe I should let myself die of hunger. With a view, therefore, to lead a life agreeable to my humour, to free myself from the trouble of managing my estate, and above all things to save myself the plague of a steward; I have converted my whole patrimony, consisting of several valuable inheritances, into ready money. In this trunk are fifty thousand ducats; more than I shall ever have occasion for, was I to live another age; for I do not spend a thousand a year, and am already turned of fifty. I am not at all afraid of what is to happen; for, thank heaven, I am not addicted to any one of the three things which commonly bring men to ruin; I am not a slave to my stomach, I play only for amusement, and am quite cured of women. So that I am under no apprehension of being ranked in my old age among those voluptuous dotards who purchase the favours of courtezans at an extravagant price."

"What a happy man you are! (said the corregidor) you are very unjustly suspected of being a spy; that office being very unfit for a person of your character. Proceed, Don Barnard (added he); continue the life you now lead, and, far from disturbing your happiness, I declare myself the guardian of it; I beg the favour of your friendship, and offer you mine in return." "Ah, Signior (cried my master, penetrated with these obliging expressions) I accept the precious offer you make with equal joy and respect; for in vouchsafing me your friendship, you increase my wealth and crown my felicity." After this conversation, which the Alguazil and I overheard at the closet-door, the corregidor took his leave of Don Barnard, who could not enough express his gratitude; while I, to second my master, and assist him in de-

ing the honours of the house, overwhelmed the Alguazil with civilities, making a thousand profound bows, though in the bottom of my soul I harboured that disdain and aversion which every man of honour has for one of his occupation.

## CHAP. II.

*The astonishment of Gil Blas, when he met Captain Rolando at Madrid, and the curious things which that robber recounted to him.*

**D**ON Barnard de Castel Blazo, after having waited upon the corregidor to the street, returned, with all expedition, to lock his strong box, and all the doors that secured it. Then we went out, both very well satisfied; he for having acquired a powerful friend, and I for being now insured of my six rials a day. The desire I had to recount this adventure to Melendez, made me take the road to his house, which when I had almost reached, I perceived captain Ronaldo! I was confounded at finding him in this place, and could not help shivering at sight of him. He knew me at once, accosted me very gravely, and preserving still his air of superiority, ordered me to follow him. I obeyed with fear and trembling, saying to myself, "Alas! he will doubtless make me pay what I owe him. Whither will he lead me? perhaps to some subterranean abode in this city. A plague upon it! If I thought so, I would let him see in a hurry that I have not got the gout in my toes." As I walked behind him I resolved to take particular notice of the place where he should stop, from which I proposed to scamper off as fast as my legs could carry me, should it seem in the least suspicious.

But Rolando soon banished my fear, by going into a noted tavern, whither I followed him, and where he called for the best wine, and bespoke dinner; in  
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the mean time we went into a room by ourselves, where the captain spoke in this manner. "Thou must be surprized, Gil Blas, to meet thy old commander in this place; and wilt be more so still when thou shalt hear what I am going to relate. That day on which I left thee in our subterranean retreat, and set out for Mansilla with my whole company, in order to dispose of the mules and horses which we had taken the preceding day, it was our misfortune to meet the son of the corregidor of Leon in his coach, accompanied by four men on horseback, well armed. We made two of them bite the dust, and the others betake themselves to flight; while the coachman, afraid of his master's life, cried, in a suppliant voice, O dear gentlemen! in the name of God, do not kill the only son of the corregidor of Leon." My people did not at all relent at these words, which, on the contrary, inspired them with fury: Gentlemen, (said one among us) let not the son of our mortal enemy escape: how many people of our profession hath his father put to death? let us avenge them now, and sacrifice this victim to their manes. The rest of my men approved of this proposal; and even my lieutenant prepared to act the high priest in this ceremony, when I held his hands; saying, stop, at your peril; why should we shed blood unnecessarily? Let us be satisfied with the purse of this young man, whom (since he makes no resistance) it would be the utmost barbarity to kill: besides, he is not accountable for the actions of his father, who does no more than his duty in condemning us to death; just as we do ours, in rifling travellers on the highway.

"My intercession was far from being unserviceable to the corregidor's son, from whom we took nothing but his money; and having carried off the horses of the two men we had slain, we sold them together with our own, at Mansilla; then returning to our cavern, which we reached next day before it was light,



we were not a little astonished to find the trap door lifted up : and our surprize redoubled when we saw Leonarda fettered in the kitchen. Being briefly informed by her of what had happened, we wondered how thou could'st outwit us, never having thought thee capable of playing such a clever trick, and we forgave thee on account of the invention. Having untied our cook-maid, and given orders to dress victuals for us, we went to look after our horses in the stable, where the old negro, who had received no sustenance for four and twenty hours, was at the last gasp. We would have given him all the assistance in our power ; but he had lost his senses, and was otherwise so low, that, notwithstanding our good-will, we left the poor devil in the clutches of death. This did not deprive us of our appetite, which having satisfied, with a sumptuous meal, we retired to our several chambers, and slept the rest of the day : when we got up, Leonarda let us know that Domingo was no more, upon which we carried him to the cellar, where thou mayest remember thy bed was, and there performed his funeral obsequies, as if he had enjoyed the honour of being our companion.

“ Five or six days after, it happened, that, intending to make an excursion, we one morning on the skirts of the wood fell in with three troops belonging to the holy brotherhood, who seemed waiting in order to attack us. As we perceived only one of the three at first, we despised it, though more numerous than our company, and attacked it accordingly ; but while we were engaged with this, the other two, which had found means to keep themselves hitherto concealed, rushed upon us so suddenly, that our valour was of little or no service, and we were under a necessity of yielding to the numbers of the foe. Our lieutenant and two of our men fell on the field, while the two that remained, and I, were so hemmed in, and overpowered, that we were taken prisoners ; and while two of their troops conducted us to Leon, the  
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third went and destroyed our retreat, which had been discovered as follows: a peasant of Lucena, crossing the forest in his return home, perceived by accident, the trap-door of our cavern lifted up, that very day on which thou madest thy escape with the lady; and suspecting that it was the place of our abode, had not courage to go in, but contented himself with taking a good observation of the place; which, the better to mark, he cut off with his knife thin slices of bark from the trees, at small distances as he went along, until he had got quite out of the wood; then repairing to Leon, imparted his discovery to the corregidor, who received it with so much the more joy, as his son had been robbed by our company, assembled three troops in order to apprehend us, and the peasant was their guide.

“ My arrival furnished a shew for all the inhabitants of Leon: had I been a Portuguese general made prisoner of war, the people could not have been more eager to see me.” “ Behold (said they) behold the famous captain who was the terror of this country, and who, with his two comrades, deserves to have the flesh torn from his bones with red-hot pincers.” “ Being carried before the corregidor, he began to insult me, saying, “ Well, miserable wretch! heaven, wearied with the disorders of thy life, at last resigns thee to my justice.” “ Sir (replied I) if my crimes are manifold, at least I cannot reproach myself with the death of your only son, whose life I preserved, for which you owe me some acknowledgment.” “ Ah, miscreant! (cried he) people of thy character are not intitled to the privileges of honour: and even if I had a mind to save thy life, the duty of my office would not allow me.” “ Having spoke to me in this manner, he ordered us to be imprisoned in a dungeon, where he did not let my companions linger long; for they went out in three days, to act their last tragical scene in the market-place. As for me, I remained three whole weeks in jail, imagining that my punishment

ment was deferred in order to make it more terrible; and was in expectation of a death altogether new; when the corregidor ordering me to be brought into his presence, said, "Listen to thy sentence—Thou art free. Had it not been for thee, my only son would have been murdered on the highway. As a father, I was willing to acknowledge this piece of service, but not having it in my power to acquit thee as a judge, I have wrote to court in thy behalf, solicited thy pardon, and obtained it. Thou may'st go then whither thou shalt please: but (added he) take my advice, reflect seriously on thy ill-spent life, and from henceforth quit the profession of robbery."

"I was deeply affected with these words, and took the road of Madrid, resolved to turn over a new leaf, and live honestly in that city. I found my parents were dead, and their effects in the hands of an old relation, who gave me such a faithful account of them as guardians commonly do; all that I have been able to touch being no more than three thousand ducats, which in all probability, is not above one fourth of what is my due. But what course could I take? I should gain nothing by going to law; therefore, to avoid idleness, I have purchased the place of an Alguazil. My brethren, out of decency, would have opposed my admission, had they been acquainted with my story, which luckily they were ignorant of, or pretended to be so, which is the same thing; for in that honourable corps it is the business of every individual to conceal his own exploits: thank heaven not one of us can justly reproach his fellow: so that it may be said of the fraternity, The devil my take the best. Nevertheless, my friend (added Rolando) I will now disclose the bottom of my soul: the profession which I have embraced is not at all to my liking; it requires a behaviour too delicate and mysterious for me; and whatever tricks we practise must be very crafty and secret; O how I regret my old profession! I grant there is more safety in this new employment: but

but there was more pleasure in the other, and liberty is my delight. In all likelihood I shall get rid of my office, and set out one morning for the mountains at the source of the river Tagus, where I know there is a retreat inhabited by a numerous company, chiefly of Catalonians; that is making their eulogium in one word. If thou wilt accompany me, we will go and increase the number of those great men: I shall be second captain in their company; and will for thy better reception assure them, that I have seen thee ten times engaged by my side; I will extol thy valour to the skies, and say more in thy praise than a general says of an officer whom he wants to promote. I will take care not to mention a word of the trick that thou hast played, because it would makethem suspicious of thee: the adventure shall therefore be concealed. Well (added he) art thou ready to follow my fortune? I wait for thy reply."

"So many men, so many minds (said I to Rolando) you are born for hardy deeds, and I for a quiet and easy life." "Oh! I understand you (cried he, interrupting me) the lady whom love persuaded you to rescue still keeps possession of your heart, and doubtless you lead a happy life with her in Madrid: confess Mr. Gil Blas, that you have taken lodgings for her, and spend together the pistoles which you carried off from the subterranean retreat." I told him that he was mistaken, and that in order to undeceive him, I would, while we should be at dinner, relate the story of the lady: this I did accordingly, and informed him of all that had happened to me, since I quitted the company. Towards the end of our repast, he resumed the subject of the Catalonians, owned that he was determined to join them, and made a new attempt to engage me in the same resolution. But finding that I was not to be persuaded, he darted a fierce look at me, saying in a very serious tone, "Since thou hast such a grovelling soul as to prefer thy servile condition to the honour of associating with men of courage, I abandon

abandon thee to the baseness of thy inclinations: but listen to the words I am about to pronounce, and let them remain engraven on thy memory: Forget that thou hast met me to-day, and never talk of me from henceforth: for if ever I shall hear that thou so much as namest me in conversation—thou knowest me—I will say no more.” Having thus expressed himself, he called to pay, discharged the bill, and we got up in order to part.

### C H A P. III.

*He is dismissed by Don Barnard de Castel Blazo, and enters into the service of a beau.*

AS we went out of the tavern, and were taking leave of one another, my master happening to pass, saw me, and I perceived looked hard at the captain, which made me believe that he was surprized to find me acquainted with such a figure. Certain it is, that the appearance of Rolando could not prepossess people in his favour: for he was a very tall fellow with a long visage and hook-nose; and though not ugly, had very much the air of a rank sharper.

I was not deceived in my conjectures; for in the evening I found Don Barnard still harping on the captain's figure, and extremely well disposed to believe all the fine things I could have said of him, had not my mouth been shut. “Gil Blas (said he) who is that tall spunger in whose company I saw thee to-day?” I replied, “He is an Alguazil;” and thought he would rest satisfied with that answer; but he asked a great many other questions; and as I appeared embarrassed, because I remembered the threat of Rolando, he broke the conversation abruptly, and went to bed. Next morning, when I had done my duty as usual, instead of six rials, he gave me as many ducats; saying, “Hold, my friend, here is what I give thee for having served me hitherto; go, and seek for another place, for I cannot put up with a servant who  
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has such honourable acquaintances." I took it in my head to pretend in my own justification, that my acquaintance with the Alguazil was occasioned by my having prescribed for him, while I practised physic at Valladolid. "Very well (replied my master) that's an ingenious evasion: but thou should'st have thought of it last night, and not have been so much disconcerted." "Sir (added I) I thought it would be imprudent in me to tell it: and that was the cause of my confusion." "Oh surely (replied he, clapping my shoulders gently) you have been very prudent; I did not think thou hadst been so cunning. Go child, I have no farther occasion for thee."

I went instantly to inform Melendez of this piece of bad news, who told me for my consolation, that he intended to introduce me into a better family; and accordingly, a few days after, "Gil Blas, my friend, (said he) you don't know what good news I have to tell you; you are going to enjoy the most agreeable post you could desire; for I will settle you with Don Matthias de Silva, a man of the first quality, and one of those young lords who go under the denomination of beaus: he does me the honour to buy cloth of me; on trust, indeed: but there is nothing to be lost by people of his rank: for they commonly marry rich heiresses who pay their debts: and even if that should not happen, a tradesman who understands his business, sells always so dear that he can afford to lose three fourths of his bargain. The steward of Don Matthias is my particular friend. Let us go to him now; he will himself present you to his master; and you may depend upon it he will, for my sake, treat you with uncommon regard."

In our way to the house of Don Matthias, the merchant said, "It will not be amiss, I believe, to give you some information of the character of this steward, whose name is Gregotio Rodriguez. Between you and me, he is a man of no family, who finding himself born for business, followed the bent  
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of his genius, and enriched himself with the pillage of two families which he served in quality of steward. I assure you he has a great deal of vanity, and loves to see the rest of the servants cringe to him. They must address themselves to him first, when they have the least favour to ask of their master; for should it happen that they obtain it without his interest, he has always expedients in readiness, by which it will either be revoked or rendered ineffectual. Remember this, Gil Blas, in the regulation of your conduct: pay your court to Signior Rodriguez, preferably to your master himself, and do all that lies in your power to please him: his friendship will bestead you much; he will pay your wages punctually: and if you are dextrous enough to acquire his confidence, he may give you some pretty bones to pick, out of the number he has in his possession. Don Matthias is a young lord who minds nothing but his pleasure, and would not for the world inform himself of the state of his own affairs. What a glorious family is that for a steward!"

Arriving at the house, we desired to speak with Signior Rodriguez, who, we are told, was in his own apartment: there we found with him a kind of farmer, who had a blue canvas bag full of money in his hand. The steward, who looked more pale and yellow than a girl oppressed with her maidenhead, came towards Melendez with open arms; he, on the other hand, met him in the same manner, and they embraced one another with demonstrations of friendship, in which there was, at least, as much art as nature. Then my affair coming on the carpet, Rodriguez examined me from head to foot, and told me in a very polite manner, that I was just such an one as Don Matthias wanted, and that he would with pleasure present me to that lord. Upon which, Melendez letting him know how much he was interested in my behalf, and begging that he would favour me with his protection, committed me to his care, and, after



after abundance of compliments, withdrew. He was no sooner gone than Rodriguez said to me, "I will conduct you to my master as soon as I can dispatch this honest countryman." Then going to the peasant, and taking hold of the bag, "Talego, (said he) let us see if there be just 500 pistoles here." Having counted the money and found it right, he gave the farmer a discharge for the sum, and sent him about his business; and putting the pistoles in the bag again, addressed himself to me, saying, "This is the right time for us to go to the levee of my master, who commonly rises about noon. It is near the hour, and I suppose he is up."

This was the case; we found Don Matthias in his morning-gown, lolling in an easy chair, over an arm of which he had tilted one of his legs, and poised himself by leaning his body the other way, and rasping tobacco, while he talked to a footman, who for the present did the duty of his valet de chambre. My lord, (said the steward to him) here is a young man whom I take the liberty to present as one fit to fill the place of the valet whom you dismissed two days ago: Melendez your draper recommends him, assuring me that he is a lad of merit, and I hope your lordship will be very well satisfied with his behaviour." "Enough, (answered the young lord) since you introduce him to me, I receive him into my service with implicit faith, and make him my valet de chambre. So that affair is settled; but, Rodriguez, (added he) let us talk of something else: you are come very opportunely; for I was just going to send for you. I have bad news to tell you, my dear Rodriguez. You must know I had ill luck at play last night. Together with an hundred pistoles which I had about me, I have lost two hundred more on my parole; and you know of what importance it is for people of quality to discharge that sort of debts: it is indeed the only kind which we are obliged in point of honour to pay; and we do not give ourselves much  
concern



concern about the rest: you must therefore find two hundred pistoles immediately, and send them to the countess of Pedrosa." "Sir, (said the steward) it is sooner said than done. Where shall I get that sum, to please you? I have not been able to finger one farthing of your tenants, let me threaten as hard as I can; and yet I am obliged to maintain your family in an honourable way, though I sweat blood and water in procuring wherewithal to defray the expences. True, indeed, I have hitherto, thank heaven, made shift: but I am now reduced to such extremity, that I know not what saint in heaven to invoke." "All these harangues are useless, (cried Don Matthias, interrupting him) and you worry me with your reflections. Don't you imagine, Rodriguez, that I will change my disposition, and divert myself with looking into my own affairs? An agreeable amusement, truly, for a man of pleasure like me!" "Have a little patience, (replied the steward) at the rate you go on, I foresee that you will be rid of that care in a very short time." "You fatigue me, (said the young lord, in a passion) you murder me.—Give me leave to ruin myself imperceptibly; I tell you, I want two hundred pistoles, and I must have them." "I'll go then, (said Rodriguez) and have recourse to the little old man who has already lent you money at high interest." "You may if you please have recourse to the devil, (answered Don Matthias) provided I have the two hundred pistoles, I shall give myself no farther trouble about the matter."

Just as he had pronounced these words in a hasty and discontented manner, the steward went away; and a young man of quality, called Don Antonio Centelles, came in. "What is the matter? (said this last to my master) thou art cloudy, my friend; I perceive indignation in thy countenance. What can have put you into this bad humour? I'll lay a wager, it was the man whom I met going out." "Yes, (replied Don Matthias) it was my steward; every time

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he comes to speak with me, I suffer for one quarter of an hour, by his talking about my affairs, and saying that I have quite exhausted my finances. Impertinent beast! he cannot say that he loses by me, I'm sure." "Why, child, (said Don Antonio) I am in the same condition; having a factor no a whit more reasonable than thy steward: When the rogue, in obedience to my repeated orders, brings money for me, one would think he gave it out of his own pocket. He overwhelms me with reflections. "Sir, (says he) you are undone, your rents are seized"—Upon which I am obliged to cut him short, in order to put an end to his ridiculous discourse." "The misfortune is, (said Don Matthias) we cannot live without these people, who are necessary evils." "They are so, (replied Centelles) but hark! (added he, laughing with all his might) there's a comical thought come into my head: a most incomparable conception! by which we may convert those scenes which we have with them into mirth; and divert ourselves with that which now gives us so much uneasiness. Let me demand of thy steward all the money thou shalt have occasion for; while thou dost the same by my manager; then they may moralize as they please, we can hear them with great composure; because thy steward will shew me thy accounts, and my factor will entertain thee with mine. I shall hear of nothing but thy profusion, and thou wilt see nothing but mine. This will be admirable sport."

A thousand bright strokes succeeded this folly, and mightily diverted the young lords, who conversed together with a great deal of vivacity; until their discourse was interrupted by Gregorio Rodriguez, who returned with a little old man, almost quite bald. Don Antonio would have gone away, saying, "Adieu, Don Matthias, I shall see you by and by: at present you have, doubtless, some serious affair to discuss with these gentlemen." "O! not at all, (replied my master) stay, it is no secret. That

That discreet old person whom you see is an honest man, who lends me money at the rate of twenty per cent." "How! twenty per cent, (cried Centelles, with an air of astonishment) Egad, I congratulate thee upon being in such good hands! I am not so kindly dealt with, and may say that I purchase silver at the price of gold; I commonly borrow at the rate of forty in the hundred."—

"Heavens! what extortion! (exclaimed the old usurer) do these knaves ever think of another world? I am not at all surprized at the hue and cry raised against people who lend upon interest. It is the exorbitant profit which some exact that ruins our honour and reputation. If all my brethren were like me, we should not be so much reviled: for my sole view in lending is to befriend my fellow-creatures. Ah! if times were as they have been, I would offer you my purse without interest: and truly, in spite of the present scarcity, I can hardly prevail upon myself to take twenty per cent. But for my part, I believe money has retired again within the bowels of the earth: there is no such thing to be had; for which reason I am obliged to retrench my benevolence.

How much do you want?" added he, addressing himself to my master. "I must have two hundred pistoles," replied Don Matthias. "Here are four hundred in a bag, (said the usurer) you shall have one half." So saying, he pulled from under his cloak a blue bag, which seemed to be the very same which the peasant Talego had left with the five hundred pistoles, in the hands of Rodriguez. I soon knew what to think of the matter, and found that Melendez had not praised the steward's understanding without cause. The old man having emptied the bag on the table, began to count the money: my master was inflamed with desire of possession at the sight; and struck with the totality of the sum, said to the usurer, "Signior Descomulgado, I have  
made

made a very wise reflection, truly! What a fool I am! to borrow no more than what is absolutely necessary to disengage my parole, without considering that I have not a penny in my purse. I shall be obliged to have recourse to you to-morrow; therefore, to spare you the trouble of coming back, I think it will not be amiss to pocket the whole four hundred."

"My lord, (said the usurer) a part of this money was designed for a good licentiate, who has some fat benefices, which he charitably employs in persuading young girls to retire from the world, and in furnishing their retreats. But since you have occasion for the whole sum, it is at your service: all that I desire is sufficient security." "Oh! as for security, (said Rodriguez, interrupting him, and taking a paper out of his pocket) you shall be satisfied: here is an order to be signed by Don Matthias, for five hundred pistoles, upon one of his tenants, called Talego, a rich farmer of Mondejan." "Very well, (replied the usurer) I never make many words." Upon which, the steward presented a pen to his master, who, without reading the order, set his name to the bottom, whistling all the while.

This affair being ended, the old man took his leave of my patron, who ran and embraced him, saying, "Till our next meeting, Signior usurer. I am wholly yours: I don't know why people of your profession are branded with the name of rogues! for my own part, I think you are very necessary and serviceable to society: you are the consolation of a thousand heirs, and the resource of all those lords whose expence exceeds their income." "Thou art in the right (cried Centelles) usurers are very honest people, whom we never can honour enough: I will, in my turn, embrace this gentleman, on account of his twenty per cent." With these words, he approached and hugged the old man; and these two beaux, for their diversion, began to push him back-

ward and forward to one another, like a ball between two tennis players. After he had been tossed to and fro a good while, they let him go with the steward, who was more deserving than he of their embraces, and of something else also.

Rodriguez and his under-strapper being gone, Don Matthias sent the half of his pistoles to the countess of Pedrosa, by the footman who was present, and secured the rest in a long embroidered silk purse, which he commonly wore in his pocket. Very well satisfied with seeing himself in cash, he said to Don Antonio, with a gay air, "What shall we do to-day? Let us consult about it." "You speak like a sensible man, (replied Centelles) with all my heart: let us deliberate." While they were considering how to spend the day, two other lords arrived: these were Don Alexo Segiar, and Don Fernand de Gamboa, both of them about the age of my master, that is, between eight and twenty and thirty. These four cavaliers, at meeting, hugged one another so heartily, that one would have thought they had not met for ten years before; then Don Fernand, who was a jovial companion, addressing himself to Don Matthias and Don Antonio, said, Gentlemen, where do you intend to dine to-day? If you are not engaged, I'll conduct you to a tavern, where you shall drink nectar; I supped there last night, and left it only this morning between five and six o'clock." "Would to heaven, (cried my master) that I had done the same: in which case, I should not have lost my money."

"As for me (said Centelles) I treated myself last night with a new diversion: for I love variety in my pleasures, which alone makes life agreeable. A friend of mine carried me to the house of a farmer of the revenue, a gentleman who does his own business together with that of the state. There I saw magnificence and taste, the entertainment being elegant enough. But I was mightily diverted with the ridiculous

culous behaviour of the tax-gatherer himself, who, though the most plebeian of his class, assumed the man of quality; and his wife, though horribly ugly, affected the airs of a beauty, and said a thousand silly things seasoned with the Biscayan accent, which rendered them still more remarkably foolish. Besides, there were at table four or five children, with their tutor; so that you may easily conceive how I was diverted with this family supper."

"And I, gentlemen (said Don Alexo Segiar) supped at the house of Arsenia the actresses. We were six in all; Arsenia, Florimonda, with a coquette of her acquaintance, the marquis of Zeneta, Don Juan of Moncada, and your humble servant. We spent the night in drinking and speaking bawdy. Heavens! what pleasure! 'tis true, indeed, Arsenia and Florimonda have not much genius, but their wantonness supplies the place of wit. They are merry, brisk, romping creatures, and I love them a thousand times better than your precise women of sense."

## C H A P. IV.

*How Gil Blas became acquainted with the valets of the beaus.—The admirable secret they imparted to him, of acquiring the reputation of a man of wit, at a small expence and the singular oath which they obliged him to take.*

**I**N this manner did these lords continue the conversation, until Don Matthias, whom, in the mean time, I helped to dress, was ready to go abroad. Then he bade me follow him, and all the beaus together set out for the tavern, to which Don Fernand de Gamboa had proposed to conduct them. As I walked in the rear, in company with three other valets, for each of the cavaliers had one, I observed, not without wonder, that these three domestics copied the air and manner of their respective masters. Having saluted them as their new comrade, they returned the



civility, and one among them, after having observed me some minutes, said, "Brother, I perceive that you have never as yet served a young lord." "No, indeed (answered I) it is not long since I came to Madrid." "So I suppose (replied he) you smell strong of the country; you seem timorous and awkward, and there is a stiffness in your behaviour: but, no matter, we will soon polish you, take my word." "I am afraid you flatter me," said I to him. "Not at all (he replied) if you was the greatest blockhead in the universe, we shall be able to make you pass: you may depend upon it."

This was enough to make me understand that my confederates were brave lads, and that I could not be in better hands, in order to become a pretty fellow. When we arrived at the tavern, we found an entertainment ready, which Signior Don Fernand had the precaution to bespeak in the morning; our masters sat down to table, and we stood ready to serve them: then they began to talk with such gaiety, that I was delighted to hear them. I was very much diverted with their different characters, thoughts and expressions; their fire, their sallies of imagination, made me believe them a new species of men! When the dessert was upon the table, we brought in a great number of bottles of the best Spanish wine: and left them, to go and dine by ourselves, in a little hall where the cloth was laid on purpose.

I soon perceived that the knights my companions had more merit than I at first imagined: they not only assumed the manners of their masters, but even affected their very language, and these rascals succeeded so well, that, the quality air excepted, there was no difference: I admired their free and easy deportment; was charmed with their wit, and despaired of ever being so agreeable. The valet of Don Fernand, because his master treated ours, performed the honours of the banquet, and that nothing might be wanting, called the landlord, saying, "Master An- drew



drew Mantuano, give us ten bottles of your very best wine, and according to custom, add them to my master's bill." "With all my heart (replied the landlord) but, Mr. Gaspard, you know that Signior Don Fernando owes me a good many entertainments already; and if by your means I could touch a little money"—"Oh! (said the valet, interrupting him) give yourself no trouble about what he owes you: I'll answer for it; my master's debts are as good as gold: 'tis true, indeed, some unmannerly creditors have seized our rents, but we shall obtain a replevy very soon, and then we will discharge your bill, without so much as examining the articles." Mantuano brought the wine, notwithstanding the rents being seized; and we drank it in expectation of the replevy. It was a good jest to see us, every moment, toasting one another, under the surnames of our masters: Don Antonio's valet giving the name of Gamboa to Don Fernando's servant, and Don Fernando's footman honouring Don Antonio's valet with that of Centelles; they called me Silva, and, by degrees, we got as drunk, under these borrowed names, as our masters to whom they properly belonged.

Though I did not shine so much as my companions, they did not fail to express their approbation of me. "Silva (said one of the archest among them) we shall make something of thee, my friend: I perceive thou hast a fund of genius, but dost not know how to use it to advantage. The fear of speaking nonsense hinders thee from talking at a venture; and yet, by this alone, a thousand people, now-a-days, acquire the reputation of wits. If thou hast a mind to shine, give the rein to thy vivacity, and indifferently risk every thing that comes uppermost.—Thy blunders will pass for a noble boldness; and if, after having uttered a thousand impertinencies, one witticism escapes thee, the silly things will be forgot, the lucky thought will be remembered, and the world

will conceive an high opinion of thy merit. This is what our masters practise with such success; and what every man must do, who aspires to the reputation of a distinguished wit."

Besides that I was but too fond of passing for a fine genius, the secret which he had disclosed to me seemed so easy, that I was resolved not to neglect it, I put it instantly to the proof, and the wine I had drank contributed to its success; that is, I spoke at random and had the good fortune to throw out, among a great deal of nonsense, some flashes of wit, by which I acquired great applause. This coup d'essai filled me with confidence: I collected all my vivacity to produce some bright sally, and chance befriended me in the attempt.

"Well, (said he who spoke to me in the street) don't you begin to get rid of your rust? Thou hast not been two hours in our company, and art already quite another man. Thou wilt improve visibly every day. See what it is to serve people of quality; it elevates the mind, while the being valets to citizens has a quite contrary effect." "Doubtless, (answered I) and therefore I will henceforth consecrate my service to the nobility." "That's nobly said, (cried Don Fernando's valet, half seas over) it does not belong to your citizens to possess such superior geniuses as we are. Come therefore, gentlemen, (added he) let us take an oath never to serve such rascallions, and swear to it by the river Styx." We laughed heartily at Gaspard's conceit, which we approved of very much, and took the burlesque oath with our glasses in our hands.

Thus we continued at table until our masters were pleased to retire, which was midnight, a circumstance which my companions looked upon as an excess of sobriety. 'Tis true, indeed, these young lords left the tavern in such good time, only with a view to visit a famous coquette, who lived in the court-end of the town, and kept open house for your men of pleasure

by night as well as by day. She was between thirty and forty years old, still extremely handsome, agreeable, and so consummate in the art of pleasing, that it was said, she sold the remains of her beauty at a higher price than that which she had received for its first fruits. There were always in her house two or three other courtezans of the first rank, who contributed not a little to the great concourse of lords who frequented it. They went to play in the afternoon, then supped, and spent the night in drinking and making merry. Here our masters staid till morning; and we also, without feeling the time lie heavy on our hands; for while they diverted themselves with the mistresses, we amused ourselves with the maids; and at last departed all together at break of day, every one going to bed at his own home.

My master getting up, as usual, about noon, dressed himself, and went out. I followed him to the house of Don Antonio Centelles, where we found one Don Alvaro de Acunha, an old gentleman, and professed rake. All the young sparks, who had an ambition to become fine gentlemen, put themselves under his tuition; by which they were formed for pleasure, taught to make a figure in the world, and to spend their fortunes in a good grace, he himself being under no apprehension of squandering away his own, which was gone long ago. These three cavaliers having saluted one another, Centelles said to master, "Faith, Don Matthias, thou could'st not come at a better time; Don Alvaro is going to carry me to the house of a citizen, who has invited the marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan de Moncado to dinner, and thou shalt be of the party." "What is the name of this citizen?" said Don Matthias. "He is called Gregorio de Noriega, replied Don Alvaro; and I will in two words give you a character of the man. His father, who is a rich jeweller, having gone abroad to negotiate his affairs, left him the enjoyment of a large income: but Gregorio is a fool, who has a dis-

position prone to spend his estate, in doing which he affects the beau, and would fain pass for a man of spirit in despite of nature. As he begged me to take him under my direction, I govern him at present; and I can assure you gentlemen, he is in a fair way; his finances being already pretty well sunk."—"I don't at all doubt it, cried Centelles: I see him already at the work-house. Come, Don Matthias, let us make an acquaintance with him, that we may have some share in his ruin." "With all my heart, replied my master: I love dearly to see the fortune of these little upstart gentlemen overturned, because they vainly pretend to rival us in spendor. Nothing, for example, ever gave me so much diversion as the misfortune of that publican's son, who was, by his inclination for play, and his vanity in aping the great, obliged to sell all, to his very house." "Oh! as for him said Don Antonio, he deserves no compassion; for he is as great a coxcomb in his adversity as he was in high life."

Centelles and my master, repairing with Don Alvaro, to the house of Gregorio de Noriega, Mogicon and I went thither also, both of us ravished to find a feast going forward, and to have an opportunity of contributing; on our parts, to the ruin of a citizen. As we went in, we perceived several people busy in dressing the dinner; and the ragouts they were preparing sent forth a savoury steam, that very much prepossessed the smell in favour of the taste. The marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan of Moncado arrived, and the entertainer seemed to be a great booby, who attempted, in vain, to assume the carriage of the beau, being a very bad copy of the excellent originals; or rather a downright simpleton, who affected an air of understanding. Imagine to yourself a man of this character in the midst of five jokers, whose sole aim was to exercise their raillery upon him, and engage him in unsupportable expence. "Gentlemen, said Don Alvaro, after the first compliments, I present to you

Signior

Signior Gregorio de Noriega, as a complete cavalier. Besides a thousand other excellent qualifications, he possesses an understanding so exquisitely cultivated, that you cannot take him amiss. He is equally strong on all subjects, from the most close and subtle logic, down to the art of spelling." "Oh! now you flatter me," said the citizen, interrupting him with a very foolish laugh. Signior Alvaro, I may, with more justice, return the compliment, for you are, as one may say, a very draw-well of erudition." "I had no design," replied Don Alvaro, to fish for such a genteel repartee: but, upon my word, gentlemen, Signior Gregorio cannot fail of acquiring great reputation in the world." "For my own part," said Don Antonio, what I am most charmed with, and what I greatly prefer to his knowledge in orthography, is the judicious choice he makes of his company: instead of confining himself to the conversation of citizens, he cultivates acquaintance with none but young lords, without giving himself any trouble about the expence attending it. There is, in this conduct, an elevation of sentiment, and it may be called spending one's money with taste and discernment."

These ironical praises were followed by a thousand more of the same sort, and poor Gregorio was spared by none of them; each of the beaux, in his turn, breaking his jest, the meaning of which the fool did not perceive. On the contrary, he took every thing in a literal sense; and appeared very happy in his guests; nay, he seemed even pleased with being turned into ridicule: and, in short, served them as a butt during the whole time of dinner. They staid with him the remaining part of the day, and all night long; whilst we drank at discretion as well as our masters; and by that time they took leave of the citizen, we were all in an excellent trim.

## C H A P. V.

*Gil Blas sets up for a man of gallantry, and becomes acquainted with a fine lady.*

AFTER having refreshed myself with some hours of sleep, I got up in good humour; and remembering the advice I had received from Melendez, went, my master not being yet awake, and presented my respects to the steward, whose vanity seemed not a little flattered with this instance of my regard. He received me very graciously, and asked if I was not familiarized to the way of living practised among young noblemen. I replied, that though it was quite new to me as yet, I did not despair of being reconciled to it in time.

And truly this happened very soon, for my humour and disposition suffered a thorough change. From being sedate and pensive, I became a brisk blundering coxcomb; and the valet of Don Antonio complimented me on my metamorphosis, saying, that there was now nothing wanting to make me illustrious, but an intrigue; which, he affirmed, was absolutely necessary towards finishing the character of a pretty fellow, all our comrades being beloved by some fair lady, and he alone being in possession of the good graces of no less than two women of quality. I believed the rogue told a lie, and said to him, "Monsieur Mogicon, to be sure you are a handsome young fellow, who have a great deal of wit and merit; but I cannot conceive how ladies of quality, especially as you do't live among such, can allow themselves to be charmed by a man of your condition." "Why truly, said he, they do't know who I am—I make all my conquests in the dress, and even in the name of my master. I'll tell you how: I dress myself like a young nobleman; I assume his behaviour, and go out to take the air; I ogle all the women I see, until I meet with one who returns the leer:

her



her I follow, and find means to speak with. I call myself Don Antonio de Centelles, and demand an assignation: upon which the lady stands upon ceremony: I press her to comply; she yields, et cætera. —By this conduct, my child, added he, I have succeeded in my intrigues, and I advise thee to follow my example."

I was too ambitious of making a figure not to listen to this advice, and besides felt no aversion to a love-intrigue: I therefore resolved to disguise myself like a young nobleman, and go in quest of amorous adventures; but as I durst not dress myself in our own house for fear of being observed, I took a rich suit of cloaths from my master's wardrobe, and making it up in a bundle, carried it into the house of a little barber, a friend of mine, where I thought I could dress and undress with more convenience. There I adorned myself to the best of my power, the barber lending a helping hand, in order to set me off; and when we imagined it was impossible to add any thing more to my appearance, I walked towards St. Jerome's meadow, from whence I was persuaded, I should not return without having found some intrigue to my liking: but before I was obliged to go so far from home, I started one of a very brilliant expectation.

As I was crossing a bye-street I saw a lady richly dressed, and perfectly genteel, come out of a small house, and get into a hackney coach that stood before the door; upon which, stopping short to gaze, I bowed to her in such a manner as to inform her that I was not at all disgusted at her appearance; and she, to let me see she deserved my notice still more than I imagined, lifted up her veil for a moment, and presented a most agreeable countenance to my view: mean while the coach drove off, and I remained in the street, not a little struck with this apparition. "What a charming figure! (said I to myself) Bless me! this is just what I wanted to compleat my cha-

rafter. If the two ladies who are in love with Mogicon are as handsome as this, I pronounce him a lucky knave. I should be charmed with my fate had I such a mistress."

While I made these reflections I cast my eyes, by accident, towards the house from whence I had seen this lovely creature come out, and perceived at a parlour-window, an old gentlewoman, who beckoned me to come in.

I flew into the house in an instant, and found, in a pretty handsome parlour, this venerable and discreet matron, who, taking me for a marquis at least, saluted me with great respect, saying, "I don't at all doubt, Signior, that you have conceived a very bad opinion of a woman, who without being acquainted with you, beckons you into her house; but, perhaps, you will think more favourably of me, when you shall know that I don't treat every body in the same manner.—But you, I suppose, are a court-lord."—"You are not mistaken, my soul (said I, stretching out my right leg, and poising my body on my left hip) I am, without vanity, of one of the best families in Spain." "I thought so by your appearance, (she replied) and I own I love to oblige people of quality; that is my foible.—I observed you through the window, looking very earnestly (as I suppose) at a lady who had just parted from me. Have you a passion for her? tell me sincerely." "Upon the faith of a courtier (answered I) she has captivated me. I never saw any thing more tempting than that creature—Bring us together, my good mother, and depend upon my acknowledgment; such good offices rendered to us grandees, seldom pass unrecompenced"

"I have already told you (replied the old gentlewoman) that I am wholly devoted to people of quality, and delight in being useful to them. I admit into my house, for instance, certain ladies, whom the exterior of virtue hinder from receiving their gallants at home; therefore, I accommodate them with my house

house, in order to reconcile the warmth of their complexions with the rules of decency." "Very well, (said I to her) and I suppose you have granted that favour to the lady in question?" "No, (she replied) this lady is a young widow of quality, who wants a lover; but she is so nice in that particular, that I don't know if you yourself will please her, notwithstanding your extraordinary merit: I have already presented to her three stout cavaliers, whom she treated with disdain." Adzooks! my dear (cried I, with an air of assurance) thou hast no more to do, but to put me on the scent. I will give thee a good account of her, believe me. I long to have a tête à tête with a shy beauty, having never, as yet, met with one of that character." "Well (said the old lady) if you come hither to-morrow, about this time, your curiosity may be satisfied." "I will not fail, (answered I) and we shall see whether or not a young nobleman, such as I, may taste the pleasure of a conquest."

I returned to the house of the little barber, without desiring any other adventures, but very impatient to see the issue of this. Next day, therefore, having been at great pains to set myself off, I repaired to the old gentlewoman's house, an hour before the appointment. "Signior, (said she) I see you are punctual, and am glad of it: for you will find it wellworth your trouble. I have seen your young widow, and have had some discourse with her about you. She has forbid me to speak; but I have conceived such a friendship for you, that I cannot hold my tongue. You have had the good fortune to make an impression on her heart, and will be happy very soon. Between you and me the lady is a delicious morsel; her husband lived with her but a very short time; he fled away as it were like a shadow; so that she is as good as a maiden." The good matron doubtless meant one of those sprightly maidens, who know how to enjoy life without the incumbrance of matrimony.

In a little time the heroine of the assignation arrived, in a stage-coach, as she had done the day before, adorned with all the pomp of dress. As soon as she appeared in the hall, I began by five or six a-la-mode bows, accompanied with their most fashionable contortions: after which I approached her with a very familiar air, saying, "My princess, behold a young nobleman, who is entrapt with your beauty. Your image since yesterday, has incessantly presented itself to my imagination, and expelled a dutchess, who had begun to set footing in my heart." "The triumph (answered she, taking off her veil) is too glorious for me, and yet I do not perfectly enjoy it: for you young noblemen are prone to change, and your hearts, they say, more difficult to keep than quicksilver." "But, my queen (I replied) let us mind the present only, and let futurity shift for itself: you are handsome, and I amorous; and, if you approve of my passion, let us engage without any further reflection, and embark like sailors, who think only of the pleasures, without perceiving the perils of their voyage."

So saying, I threw myself in a transport at the feet of my nymph, and, the better to imitate the beaux, pressed her, in a petulant manner, to make me happy. She seemed a little moved by my intreaties, but thought it was too soon to yield; therefore, pushing me gently from her, "Hold, (said she) you are too forward, and have the air of a libertine; I am afraid you are no better than a downright rake." "O fy, Madam! (cried I) sure you cannot hate what all ladies of fashion love: none but tradesmen's wives exclaim against libertinism." "You are certainly in the right, (she replied) and I cannot resist such a convincing reason. It is in vain, I find, to use grimace with noblemen like you; and the women must advance one half of the way. Know then your victory (added she, with an appearance of confusion, as if her modesty suffered in the confusion); you have inspired

“inspired me with sentiments which I never felt before, and I want only to know who you are, that I may determine to chuse you for my lover. I believe you are a young lord, and, moreover, a man of honour. But of this I am not assured; and howsoever I may be prepossessed in your favour, I am resolved not to bestow my affection on a person unknown.”

It was then I remembered the expedient of Don Antonio's valet, on the same occasions; and, after his example, having a mind to pass for my master, “Madam, (said I to my widow) I will not refuse to tell you my name, which I need not be ashamed to own;—did you never hear of Don Matthias de Silva?” “Yes, (she replied) I have even seen him at the house of a lady, an acquaintance of mine.” Altho’ I was pretty well stocked with impudence, this answer disconcerted me a good deal; however, I recollected myself in an instant, and making an effort of genius, to extricate myself, “Well, then, my angel, (said I) you know a lord whom—I know also. Since you must have it, I am of the same family: his grandfather married my grand-uncle's sister-in-law: so that you see we are very nearly related.—My name is Don Caesar, and I am the only son of the illustrious Don Fernand de Ribera, who was slain fifteen years ago, in a battle that was fought on the frontiers of Portugal. I could describe the action, which was hellishly hot; but that would be losing the precious moments which love prompts us to employ in a more agreeable manner.

After this discourse, I became more pressing and passionate; but all to little effect: the favours which my goddess bestowed upon me, only serving to make me sigh after those which she refused: but though the barbarous creature got into her coach, that waited at the door, I went home very well satisfied with my good fortune, although I was not yet perfectly happy. If, said I to myself, I have not been able to obtain the height of my wishes, it is, because my princess is a  
 lady

lady of rank and delicacy, who thinks it indecent to yield to my transports, during the first interview. The pride of her birth has retarded my happiness, which, however, is only delayed for a few days. Not but that I had likewise some suspicions, that the whole affair was a well-concerted trick. But I loved to consider it in the most favourable point of view, and to preserve the advantageous opinion I had conceived of the lady, with whom I had agreed to meet again next day; the hope of accomplishing my wishes, giving me a taste, by anticipation, of the pleasures I expected to enjoy.

With my fancy full of these smiling images, I returned to the house of my barber, where I changed my dress, and went to wait upon my master, at a tennis-court, where I knew he was. I found him engaged in play, and even perceived that he had been lucky; for he was none of those phlegmatic gamesters, who enrich or ruin themselves, without changing a feature. In his prosperity he was full of insulting raillery, but very morose when fortune declared against him. Leaving the tennis-court in great good humour, he went directly to the prince's theatre, and I followed him to the play-house door, where giving me a ducat, "Here, Gil Blas, said he, since I have been lucky, thou shalt feel the effects of it; go and enjoy thyself with thy companions, and about midnight come to me at the house of Arsenia, where I am to sup with Don Alexo Segiar." So saying, he went in, and I remained thinking how I should spend my ducat, according to the intention of the donor. I was not long in suspense; Clarino, Don Alexo's valet, appeared all of a sudden, and I carried him to the next tavern, where we regaled ourselves till twelve o'clock: and from thence repaired together to the house of Arsenia, where he was likewise ordered to rendezvous. A little lacquey opened the door, and introduced us into a parlour, where the waiting woman of Arsenia and Florimonda sat together, laughing as if for a wa-



ger, while their mistresses entertained our masters above.

The arrival of two merry fellows, who had supped to their satisfaction, could not be disagreeable to chambermaids; especially to those of the actresses: but what was my astonishment, when, in the person of one of them, I beheld my widow! my adorable widow, whom I believed a marchioness, or countess! She seemed no less surprized at seeing her Don Cæsar de Ribera, metamorphosed into the valet de chambre of a beau: however, we observed one another, without being disconcerted; and both, at one time, were seized with such a violent inclination to laugh, that we could not help indulging it. After which, Laura, so was my princess called, taking me aside, while Clarino made up to her companion, very graciously presented her hand, saying, softly, "Take it, Don Cæsar: instead of reproaching, let us compliment one another, my friend: you performed your part to admiration; and I did not behave amiss in mine. What say you? confess that you took me for one of those fine ladies of quality, who amuse themselves with intrigues." "'Tis true, answered I; but whosoever you are, my queen, I have not changed my sentiments with my dress: I beg you will accept my services, and allow the valet de chambre of Don Matthias to finish that which Don Cæsar had so happily begun." "Yes, said she, I love thee still better in thy own character, than in that of another: thou art just such a man as I am a woman, and that is the strongest approbation I can bestow: I therefore receive thee into the crowd of my adorers: we shall have no occasion for the ministry of the old woman: for thou may'st come hither with the utmost freedom; we ladies of the stage live without constraint, and helter-skelter with the men. The effects of this communication are sometimes very visible indeed; but the town laughs at them, and our business, thou knowest, is to divert it."

Here we broke off, because there were others present, and the conversation became general, sprightly, joyous, and full of palpable double entendres. Every one bore a part; Arsenia's maid in particular, my lovely Laura, shone very much, and shewed a great deal more wit than virtue. On the other hand, our masters and the actresses often burst out into long fits of laughter, which we overheard, and from which we concluded that their discourse was much of the same stamp with our own. If all the fine things, which were said that night at Arsenia's, had been committed to writing, they would have composed, I believe, a treatise very instructive for youth. In the mean time, the hour of retreat, that is, the dawn, arrived, and we were obliged to part. Clarino followed Don Alexo, and I went home with Don Matthias.

## C H A P. VI.

*The conversation of some noblemen, about the players of the prince's company.*

THAT day, while my master was dressing, he received a billet from Don Alexo Segiar, desiring his company at his house, whither he went, and found with him the marquis of Zeneta, and another young nobleman of a good mien, whom I had never seen before. "Don Matthias (said Segiar to my master, presenting the unknown cavalier) this is Don Pompeio de Castro, a relation of mine, who has been at the court of Portugal, almost from his infancy; he arrived at Madrid last night, and will set out to-morrow for Lisbon; so that, as he can spare me only one day, I am resolved to enjoy the precious opportunity, and in order to make it the more agreeable to him, have called you and the marquis of Zeneta to my assistance." Upon this, my master and Don Alexo's kinsman embraced and complimented one another, and I was much pleased with the discourse of Don Pompeio, who

who seemed to have a great share of judgment and penetration.

Having dined at Segiar's, these noblemen amused themselves at cards, till the hour of going to plays; and then went all together to the prince's theatre, to see a new tragedy, intitled, *The Queen of Carthage*. After the representation of the piece, they returned, and supped where they had dined; the conversation at first turning on the poem they had seen performed, and afterwards upon the actors. "As for the work itself, cried Don Matthias, I have no great opinion of it; it makes *Æneas* still more insipid than he is represented in the *Æneid*; but every body must agree it was divinely played. What, says Signior Don Pompeio? he does not seem to be of my way of thinking." "Gentlemen, said that cavalier smiling, I have perceived you so much charmed with your players, and in particular with your actresses, that I ought not to be so bold as to signify my dissent from your opinions."—"You are much in the right, said Don Alexo in a jocular manner, your censures will be very unreasonable here; and you ought to shew some respect for our actresses before us, who are the trumpets of their reputation. As we drink with them every day, we can no less than warrant them perfect in their vocation; and even give them certificates, if there be occasion for it." "I do not at all doubt it, answered his relation, and I dare say you would do the same for their morals, so much are you their friends."

"Your comedians at Lisbon, said the marquis of Zeneta, with a sneer, are doubtless much better than ours." "Yes, certainly, replied Don Pompeio; at least there are some of them who have no defect." "And these, resumed the marquis, may depend upon your certificate." "I have no connection with them, said Don Pompeio, and as I never enter into their parties of pleasure, can judge of their merit without prejudice. But do you really, added he, think your company so excellent?" No faith! said the marquis, I believe

I believe no such thing; and provided you give me leave to defend a very small number of the players, I will willingly give up all the rest. Won't you allow that she who played the part of Dido, is an admirable actress? did she not represent that queen with all the dignity and grace which is conformable to the idea we have of her? and did not you admire her art in engaging the mind of the spectator, and making him feel the emotions of all those passions that are expressed? She may be said to be consummately skilled in all the refinements of declamation." "I agree, said Don Pompeo, that she knows how to awake and touch the passions of the audience: no player had ever more feeling, and on the whole, her representation is very fine. But she is far from being a perfect actress. I was shocked with two or three things in her performance. When she would express surprize, she rolls her eyes in such an extravagant manner, as very ill becomes the deportment of a princess. Add to this, that in raising her voice, which is naturally low, she corrupts the sweetness of it, and produces a very disagreeable croaking: besides, in more places than one, she gave reason to suspect that she did not very well understand her part: but, however, I am inclined to impute this rather to inattention than want of capacity."

"By what I can see, said Don Matthias to the critic, you will scarce write a panegyric on our actresses." "Pardon me, replied Don Pompeo, I can discover great talents through their defects. I own I was enchanted with that actress who performed the part of a chambermaid in the interludes: she has a fine genius, treads the stage gracefully, and every witticism she utters is seasoned with a sarcastic smile, full of charms, which very much enhances the value of what is said. She may, indeed, be blamed for indulging her fire sometimes a little too much, and transgressing the bounds of modest assurance. But we must not be too severe; and I could only wish that she would correct one bad habit she has contracted.

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Oft-times in the middle of a serious scene, the interrupts the performance all of a sudden, by yielding to a silly desire of laughing, with which she is seized. You'll say she is applauded by the pit, even at these times: there, I own, she is lucky."

" Well, what do you think of the men? said the marquis interrupting him, surely you'll charge them full volley, since you have been so unmerciful to the women." " No, said Don Pompeo, I think you have some promising young actors; and am particularly pleased with that fat comedian who acted the part of Dido's prime-minister: he repeats very naturally, and declaims just as they do in Portugal." " If he can please you, said Segiar, you must be charmed with the action of him who played the part of Æneas. Is not he a great comedian! an original!" " Very original! replied the critic; his cadence is quite peculiar, and his tones abundantly shrill: he almost always deserts nature; hurries over the words which contain the sentiment, and places the emphasis where it should not be; making pauses even on articles and conjunctions. He diverted me very much; particularly when he expressed to his confidant the violence he did himself, in abandoning the princess: never was grief more comically expressed." " Softly cousin, replied Don Alexo, thou wilt make us believe by and by that there is not a great deal of taste at the court of Portugal. Dost thou know that the actor of whom we speak is reckoned a phoenix? Didst thou not hear what claps of applause he obtained? A plain proof that he is far from being contemptible." " That is no proof at all, answered Don Pompeo: Gentlemen, added he, let us not, I beg of you, lay any stress upon the applause of the pit, which is often bestowed very unseasonably:—nay, more seldom on true merit than on false. As Phœdus observes, by an ingenious fable, which I beg leave to repeat; Here it is—

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"The inhabitants of a certain city being assembled in public, to see pantomimes, there was, among the performers, a favourite actor, whom they applauded every moment. This buffoon having a mind to close the scene with a new kind of representation, appeared alone upon the stage, stooped down, covered his head with his cloak, and squeaking like a pig, acquitted himself so well, that the audience actually imagined he had one under his cloaths: they ordered him therefore to strip; which he having done, and nothing appearing, the whole assembly thundered applause.— A peasant who happened to be one of the spectators, shocked at these expressions of admiration, cried, gentlemen, you have no cause to be charmed with that buffoon, who is not such an exquisite actor as you imagine: I can play the pig better than he, and if you doubt it come hither again to-morrow at this hour. The people, prepossessed in favour of their pantomimes, re-assembled next day in greater numbers, rather to hiss the peasant than see what he could do. The two rivals appearing on the stage, the buffoon began, and was applauded more than ever: then the countryman stooping in his turn, and muffling his head in his cloak, pinched the ear of a real pig, which he held under his arm, and made it squeak most piercingly; nevertheless, the audience gave the preference to the pantomime; and hooted the peasant, who all of a sudden producing the pig to the spectators; Gentlemen, said he, it is not me whom you hiss, but this poor pig himself: such excellent judges you are."

"Cousin, said Alexo, thy fable is too severe: but notwithstanding thy pig, we will not give up our opinion. Let us change the discourse, added he; I am tired of this subject. So, thou wilt depart to-morrow, in spite of my desire to enjoy thy company a little longer?" "I wish I could make a longer stay in Madrid, replied his kinsman, but it is not in my power."



power. I have told you already, that I came to the court of Spain about an affair of state : and at my arrival yesterday had an audience of the prime-minister, whom I shall see again to-morrow morning ; immediately after which, I shall set out on my return to Lisbon." " Thou art become altogether Portuguese, said Segiar, and in all likelihood wilt never return to live in Madrid." " I believe I shall not, answered Don Pompeio : for I am so happy as to be beloved by the king of Portugal ; and enjoy a great deal of pleasure at his court. But notwithstanding his kindness to me, would you believe that I have been on the point of quitting his dominions for ever ?" " Pray tell us the reason, said Don Alexo." " With all my heart, answered Don Pompeio ; and at the same time will relate the story of my life."

## C H A P. VII.

*The history of Don Pompeio de Castro.*

**D**ON Alexo, added he, knows that while I was yet a boy, I resolved to carry arms ; and that seeing our own country in profound peace, I went to Portugal, from whence I passed over into Africa with the duke of Braganza, who gave me employment in the army under his command. Being a younger brother of very small fortune, I was under a necessity of signalizing myself in such a manner as to attract the notice of the general ; and did my duty so well, that the duke promoted and put me in a condition to serve with honour. After a long war, the issue of which you all know, I attached myself to the court, and the king, upon the recommendation of the general officers, gratified me with a considerable pension. Sensible of this monarch's generosity, I lost no occasion of manifesting my gratitude by my assiduity ; and was always in attendance at those hours in which people are permitted to pay their respects : by which behaviour, I insensibly acquired  
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the love of that prince, who honoured me with new favours.

Having one day distinguished myself at the ring, and a bull-fight that preceded it, the whole court commended my strength and address; and when I returned home, loaded with applause, I found a billet importing, that a lady, the conquest of whom ought to flatter me more than all the honour I had that day acquired, wanted to converse with me; and that I should in the twilight repair to a certain place that was described. This letter gave me more pleasure than all the praise I had received, and I imagined that the person who wrote it must be a lady of the first quality. You may easily guess that I flew to the rendezvous, where an old woman, being in waiting to serve as a guide, introduced me, by a little garden-door, into a great house, and shut me in a rich closet, saying, "Stay here until I inform my mistress of your arrival." I perceived a great many curious things in this closet, which was enlightened by a great number of wax-candles; but my sole view, in considering its magnificence, was to confirm myself in the opinion I had already conceived of the lady's rank. If all that I saw seemed to assure me she was a person of the first quality, when she appeared, I was convinced of it, by her noble and majestic air: nevertheless, I was mistaken.

"Signior cavalier, (said she) after the advances I have made, it would be ridiculous to conceal the tender sentiments I have for you, which, however, were not inspired by that merit you have this day shewn before the whole court. That only has hastened the discovery; for I have seen you more than once, and enquired into your character, which pleased me so much, that I determined to follow my inclination. Don't imagine, added she, that you have made a conquest of some duchess: I am no other than the widow of a simple officer of the king's guards; but what makes your victory still more glorious,

rious, is the preference I give you to one of the greatest lords of the kingdom. The duke of Almeyda is in love with me, and spares nothing to inflame me with a mutual passion; but hitherto he has been unsuccessful, and I suffer his addresses only through vanity."

Though I found, by her discourse, that I had to do with a coquet, I thought myself very much obliged to fortune for this adventure: Donna Hortensia (so was the lady called) was still in the prime of youth, and I was dazzled with her beauty; besides, she offered me the possession of a heart which would not yield to the addresses of a duke. What a triumph was this for a young Spanish cavalier! I accordingly threw myself at her feet, thanked her for her goodness, said all that a man of gallantry could utter on such an occasion, and she had reason to be satisfied with the transports of my gratitude. We parted the best friends in the world, after having agreed to see one another every night on which she should be disengaged from the duke of Almeyda, and this she promised to advertise me of punctually; in which she did not fail; so that, in a word, I became the Adonis of this new Venus.

But the pleasures of life are far from being eternal! Whatever measures the lady could take to conceal our correspondence from my rival, he did not fail to get notice of the whole of what it was so much our interest to keep from his knowledge. A malecontent chambermaid informed him of the affair; and that lord, naturally generous, but withal haughty, jealous, and passionate, was incensed at my presumption: rage and jealousy took possession of his soul; and, following the dictates of his fury, he resolved to avenge himself of me in an infamous manner. One night, while I was with Hortensia, he waited for me at the little garden-door, attended by all his footmen, armed with clubs; and as soon as I came out, making these wretches seize me, ordered

them to cudgel me to death. "Strike, said he, and let the audacious villain perish under your hands; for so I am resolved to punish his insolence." He had no sooner spoke these words, than his people assaulted me all together, and gave me so many blows, that I lay streiched upon the ground without sense or motion. After which, they retired with their master, who had regaled himself with this cruel execution, and I remained, as they left me, during the rest of the night. At break of day, some people happened to pass, and perceiving still some life in me, were so charitable as to carry me to the house of a surgeon; luckily my wounds were not mortal, and I fell into the hands of a skilful artist, who made a perfect cure of me in two months: at the end of which time, I repaired again to court, and resumed my former way of living, save that I never went back to Hortensia, who, on her part, took no step to see me again, because the duke, on these terms, had pardoned her infidelity.

My adventure being universally known, and nobody suspecting my courage, every one was astonished to see me as tranquil as if I had not received an affront: for I imparted my thoughts to no man breathing; and seemed to be void of all resentment; so that people did not know what to think of my feigned insensibility. Some believed that, notwithstanding my courage, the rank of my antagonist kept me in awe, and obliged me to digest the injury: others, with more reason, suspected my silence, and looked upon the peaceable appearance I put on, as a deceitful calm. Of this opinion was the king, who did not think me a person that would leave such an outrage unpunished; but believed that I would not fail to revenge myself as soon as I could find a favourable opportunity. That he might know whether or not he guessed my sentiments aright, he called me, one day, into his closet, where he said, "Don Pompeio, I know the accident which has happened

to you, and am, I confess, surprized at your tranquillity, which must certainly be dissimulation."

"Sire, I replied, I know not who was the aggressor, having been attacked in the dark by people unknown; so that I must console myself for my misfortune as well as I can." "No, no, (said the king) you must not think to dupe me with that evasion, which is all dissembled: I have been informed of the whole affair; the duke of Almeyda has given you a mortal affront. You are a gentleman, and a Castilian, and I know what these qualities oblige you to do: you have formed a resolution to avenge yourself: communicate your scheme to me: I insist upon it,—and don't be afraid that you shall have cause to repent of making me your confident."

"Since your majesty (answered I) commands it, I will discover my sentiments: yes, Sir, I intend to take vengeance for the affront I have suffered. Every one who bears the name of a gentleman is accountable for it to his family. You know the unworthy treatment I have received; and I purpose to assassinate the duke of Almeyda, to revenge myself in a manner suitable to the offence. I will plunge a poignard in his breast, or shoot him through the head, and escape, if I can, into Spain: this is my design." "It is a violent one, (said the king) nevertheless, I cannot condemn it, after the cruel outrage which the duke Almeyda has committed upon you. He is worthy of the chastisement you reserve for him; but do not execute your enterprize in a hurry. Leave it to me to find out an expedient for bringing you to an accommodation." "Ah, Sir! (cried I, very much chagrined) why did you oblige me to reveal my secret? what expedient can?"—"If I don't find one to your satisfaction (said he, interrupting me) you may put your resolution in practice. I don't intend to abuse the confidence you have reposed in me, and will, by no means, betray your honour. So that you may make yourself easy on that score."

I was greatly at a loss to know in what manner the king pretended to terminate this affair in an amicable manner; and this is the method he took. In a private conversation with the duke of Almeyda, "My lord, (said he) you have injured Don Pompeio de Castro; and as you are not ignorant of his being a man of illustrious birth, and a gentleman whom I love on account of his faithful services, you ought to give him satisfaction." "I am not of an humour to refuse it; (answered the duke) if he complains of my wrath, I am ready to do him justice in the field." "You must give him another sort of reparation (replied the king) a Spanish gentleman understands the point of honour too well, to fight openly with a secret assassin. I can give you no other name, and you cannot expiate the indignity of your action any other way, than by presenting your enemy with a cane, and submitting to a retaliation." "O heavens! (cried the duke) what, Sir! would you have a man of my rank condescend to humble himself before a simple cavalier, and allow himself to be caned!" "No, (replied the monarch) I will make Don Pompeio promise that he will not strike you. Only ask pardon for the violence you committed, and present him with a cane—that is all I expect of you." "And that is too much to expect from me, Sir; (said the duke, interrupting him hastily) I will rather continue exposed to the secret shafts of his revenge." "Your life is dear to me, (said the king) and my desire is that this affair may have no bad consequences. To bring it to a conclusion the less disagreeably for you, I will be the only witness to that satisfaction which I insist upon your making to the Spaniard."

The king had occasion for all his power over the duke, to bring him to this mortifying condescension. However, he succeeded; and afterwards, sending for me, recounted the discourse he had with my enemy, and asked if I would be satisfied with the reparation agreed upon between them. "I answered in the affirmative,



firmative, and gave my word and honour, that, far from striking the offender, I would not even accept of the cane he should present to me." Things being regulated in this manner, the duke and I one day went at a certain hour, to the king, who shutting himself up with us in the closet, "Come, (said he to the duke) acknowledge your fault, and deserve to be forgiven." Upon this, my enemy made his apology, and presented me with the cane which he had in his hand. — "Don Pompeio, (said the monarch to me that instant) take the cane, and let not my presence hinder you from satisfying your injured honour: I acquit you of the promise you made, Not to strike the duke." "No, Sir, (answered I) it is sufficient that he submits to be beaten; an injured Spaniard asks no more." "Well, (replied the king) since you are contented with that satisfaction, you may now enjoy the privilege of a regular process; measure your swords, and determine your quarrel like men of honour." "It is what I ardently desire, cried the duke of Almeyda with precipitation, and that alone is capable of consoling me for the shameful condescension I have made.

So saying, he went away, full of rage and confusion, and, two hours after, sent to let me know that he waited for me in a private place. Thither I repaired, and found that lord in a humour to fight heartily. He was not quite forty, and wanted neither courage nor skill, so that the match was pretty equal. "Come, Don Pompeio, said he, let us decide our difference here: both of us ought to be exasperated to the highest pitch; you, for the treatment you have received at my hands, and I, for having asked your pardon." With these words, he drew upon me so suddenly, that I had no time to make any reply, and pushed with great vigour; but I had the good fortune to parry all his thrusts, and attacked him in my turn: when I found I had to do with an antagonist who knew how to defend as well as to assault; and I don't

know what might have happened, if he had not made a false step in retreating, and fallen backward: I stopt immediately, and bid him get up,—and he answered, “Why do you spare me? I am injured by your pity.” “I will not wrong my glory so much, said I, as to take the advantage of your misfortune; get up once more, and let us fight it out.”

“Don Pompeo, said he, rising, after this instance of your generosity, honour will not permit me to use my sword against you. What would the world say of me should I kill you? I should be looked upon as a coward, who had taken the life of a person who had it in his power to deprive me of mine: I can, therefore, no longer fight against you, and I feel the warm transports of gratitude succeed those furious emotions which reigned within my breast. Don Pompeo, added he, let our mutual hatred cease; let us even go farther—and be friends.” “Ah, my lord, cried I, I embrace the agreeable proposal with joy! I vow the most sincere friendship; and, as the first proof, promise never to set foot within the door of Donna Hortensia, even though she should desire to see me.” “It is I, said he, who must yield that lady to you—you have a juster title to her, since her inclination is fixed upon you.” “No, no, cried I, interrupting him, you love her, and the favours which she might bestow on me would give you pain: I sacrifice them, therefore, to your repose.” “Ah, too generous Castilian! replied the duke, locking me in his arms, I am charmed with your sentiments! What remorse do they produce within me! With what grief—with what shame do I reflect on the outrage you received! The satisfaction I gave you in the king’s closet seems now too slight. I will make a better reparation for the injury, and, in order to efface the dishonour of it entirely, I offer one of my nieces to you in marriage. She is a rich heiress, not yet fifteen, and still more beautiful than young.”

I made my compliments to the duke, in such expressions

pressions of acknowledgment, as the honour of entering into his alliance inspired; and, in a few days married his niece. The whole court congratulated him on his generosity to a gentleman whom he had covered with ignominy; and my friends rejoiced with me on the happy conclusion of an adventure which seemed to promise a more melancholy issue. Since that time, gentlemen, I live agreeably at Lisbon, beloved by my wife, of whom I am still fond; the duke of Almeyda gives me every day fresh proofs of his friendship, and I dare boast of being pretty well with the king of Portugal. The importance of this my journey to Madrid, which I undertook by his order, being a sufficient evidence of his esteem.

## C H A P. VIII.

*By what accident Gil Blas was obliged to seek a new place.*

SUCH was the story that Don Pompeio recounted, and which the valet of Don Alexo and I overheard, although they had taken the precaution of sending us away before it was begun; but instead of retiring we stopt at the door, which we had left half open, and from thence lost not a word of what was said. After this the noblemen set in to drinking, but their debauch did not last till day, because Don Pompeio, who was to attend the prime minister in the morning, was very desirous of a little rest: accordingly, the marquis of Zeneta and my master, embracing that cavalier, bid him adieu, and left him with his kinsman.

We went to bed, for this time, before morn, and Don Matthias, when he waked, invested me with anew employment. "Gil Blas, said he, take paper and ink, and write two or three letters, which I will dictate; henceforward thou art my secretary." Good! said I to myself; another addition to my functions: as a lacquey, I follow my master every where; as a valet

de chambre, help him to dress; and write under him as his secretary: heaven be praised! I act, like Hecate, in a threefold capacity. "Thou dost not know," added he, what I am about; which is briefly this—But be secret—for thy life shall answer it. As I sometimes meet with people who boast of their good fortune in love intrigues; I am resolved, in order to excel them all, to have always in my pocket feigned letters from women, which I will read on such occasions. This will afford me some diversion; and more happy than those of my fellows, who acquire conquests only for the pleasure of making them public, I will publish those which I have not had the trouble to make; but remember to disguise thy hand in such a manner, as that the billets may not appear to be written by the same person."

Upon this I took paper, pen, and ink, and sat down to obey Don Matthias, who at first dictated a love letter in these terms:

"YOU was not to-night at the place of assignation. Ah, Don Matthias! what can you say to justify yourself? How much have I been mistaken, and how well have I been punished for having the vanity to think that you would sacrifice all the amusements and business of the gay world, to the pleasure of seeing  
Donna Clara de Mendoza."

The next billet he made me write was in the name of a lady, who preferred him to a prince: and the last, from one who told him, that if she was sure of his discretion, she would make a voyage with him to the island of Cythera. He was not satisfied with dictating these fine epistles; he obliged me also to subscribe them with the names of ladies of quality. Upon which I could not help observing that I thought it a ticklish affair; but he desired me to keep my advice to myself, until he should have occasion to ask it: I was therefore obliged to execute his commands

mands in silence. This being done, he got up, dressed, put the letters in his pocket, and went out; and I followed him to the house of Don Juan de Moncada, who had invited five or six gentlemen of his friends to dinner.

The entertainment was sumptuous, and mirth, the best ingredient in all banquets, reigned during the repast. All the guests contributed to enliven the conversation; some by railery, and others by recounting exploits, of which they themselves were the heroes. My master, unwilling to lose such a fair opportunity of profiting by the letters he had made me write, read them aloud, with such an air of assurance, that, his secretary excepted, every body seemed to believe them genuine.—Among the gentlemen before whom he was guilty of this effrontery, there was one Don Lope de Velasco, a very sedate man, who, instead of rejoicing like the rest, at the success of the reader, coldly asked, if the conquest of Donna Clara had cost him dear.—“Almost less than nothing, replied Don Matthias: she made all the advances. Having seen me in the park, I happened to please her; upon which I was followed by her order, and, as soon as she learned who I was, she wrote to me, appointing an assignation at her house in the night, when all the family should be a-bed. I obeyed the summons, and was introduced to her apartment.—I am too much of a gentleman to tell what followed.”

At this laconic detail, the lord of Velasco changed countenance, and it was not difficult to perceive what concern he had in the lady in question. “All these billets, said he, darting a furious look at my master, are absolutely false, and especially that which you boast of having received from Donna Clara de Mendoza, than whom there is not a more chaste young lady in Spain. A gentleman, no ways your inferior, either in birth or personal merit, has done every thing in his power, during two whole years, to

make an impression on her heart; and scarce has he been able to obtain the most innocent favours, though he has reason to flatter himself, that if she was capable of granting any other kind of indulgence, it would be to him alone." "Heyday! who says anything to the contrary? said Don Matthias, with an air of raillery. —I agree with you that she is a lady of honour; and, for my part, I am a young fellow of honour; consequently you ought to believe, that nothing which was not very honourable passed between us."—"Ah! this is too much, cried Don Lope, interrupting him; jesting a-part, you are an impostor. Donna Clara never made an assignation with you at night; and I will not suffer you to blacken her reputation.—I shall say no more at present." Having thus expressed himself, he looked sternly at the whole company, and retired in such a manner, as to make me believe, that this affair would have very bad consequences. My master, who was brave enough for a lord of his character, despising the threats of Don Lope, "what a fool there is! cried he, bursting into a fit of laughter: your knights errant pretended only to maintain the beauty of their mistresses; but he, forsooth, must vindicate the chastity of his. Now this to me seems still more extravagant."

Velasco's retreat, which was in vain opposed by Moncada, did not at all disturb the banquet: the cavaliers, without taking much notice of it, continued their mirth, and did not part till next morning at five o'clock, when my master and I went home to bed. I was overwhelmed with drowsiness, and hoped to enjoy a good sleep; but I reckoned without my host, or rather without our porter, who came and waked me an hour after, telling me that there was a young man at the gate, who wanted to speak with me. "Ah! curse thee for a porter, cried I yawning, dost thou consider that I have just now got to bed? Tell the young man that I am asleep, and bid him return at another time." "He must speak with you instantly,



ly, replied he, for he assures me that the affair will admit of no delay." At these words I got up, and putting on my breeches and doublet only, went to the door cursing all the way.—" Friend, said I to the young man who waited for me, let me know, if you please, what pressing affair procures me the honour of seeing you so early in the morning?" " I have, answered he, a letter for Don Matthias, to be delivered into his own hand. He must read it immediately, for it is of the utmost consequence to him; I beg you will therefore shew me into his chamber." Thinking it treated of some very important affair, I took the liberty of waking my master. " I ask pardon, said I to him, for interrupting your repose; but the importance—" " What wouldst thou have?" cried he hastily. Upon which the young man who accompanied me said, " My lord, I have a letter for you from Don Lope de Velasco." Don Matthias took, opened, and having read it, said to Don Lope's valet, " Harkee, child, I would not get up before noon to make one in the best party of pleasure that ever was proposed; judge then, if I shall rise at six o'clock in the morning to fight.—Thou may'st tell thy master, if he will be in the same place half an hour after twelve, I will meet him there." So saying, he sunk down in his bed, and fell asleep again with great expedition.

Between eleven and twelve he got up, and dressing with great composure, went out, telling me he would dispense with my attendance: but I was too curious to know the consequence to obey him in this, and therefore walked at some distance behind him to St. Jerome's meadow, where I perceived Don Lope de Velasco waiting for him in a resolute manner. The better to observe them, I concealed myself, and from afar, could see them meet, and begin to fight a moment after. The combat was long, each in his turn having pushed his antagonist with great vigour and address; but victory declared for Don Lope, who run my master through the body, and leaving him

stretched upon the ground made off, very well satisfied with the vengeance he had taken. I ran up to the unfortunate Don Matthias, whom I found without sense, and almost without life: I was melted at the sight, and could not help shedding tears at a death, of which I had been an involuntary instrument.—Notwithstanding my grief, however, I did not forget my own little concerns, but returned home with all haste, where, without speaking a syllable of the matter, I made up a bundle of my cloaths, among which I threw, by mistake, some of my master's moveables; and when I carried it to the barber's house, where I had left my intriguing suit, published through the whole city, the fatal accident, of which I was witness: I told it to every body who gave me the hearing; and, in particular, took care to inform Rodriguez of what had happened. He seemed less afflicted with the news than busied about the measures he was to take on this occasion. Having assembled the servants, he ordered them to follow him; and repairing in a body to St. Jerome's meadow, we took up our master, who, though he still breathed, died in three hours after he was carried to his own house. Thus perished Don Matthias de Silva, for having taken it into his head to read forged love-letters at an unseasonable time.

#### C H A P. IX.

*Of the person in whose service he engaged, after the death of Don Matthias de Silva.*

A Few days after the funeral of Don Matthias. all his servants being paid and dismissed, I fixed my abode in the house of the little barber, with whom I began to live in strict friendship: and there I promised myself more pleasure than with Melendez. As I did not want money, I was in no hurry to inquire about a new place: besides, I was become nice on that point, and resolved to serve none but the quality for  
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the future; for which reason I intended to examine narrowly into whatever post should occur, believing that there was none too good for me; so much did I then think the valet of a young nobleman preferable to all others.

In the mean time, until fortune should present such a family as I thought I deserved, I imagined nothing could be more agreeable than to consecrate my leisure to my handsome Laura, whom I had not seen since that night when we were both so pleasantly undeceived.—I durst not dress in the suit of Don Cæsar de Ribera, which, unless I had assumed it for a disguise, would have made me pass for a downright madman: but my own was still very decent, and being very well equipped in stockings, shoes, and hat, I adjusted myself with the barber's assistance, in a middle way between Don Cæsar and Gil Blas, and in this condition repaired to Arsenia's house; where, finding Laura alone in the same parlour where I had seen her before, she no sooner perceived me than she cried, "Ha! are you there? I thought I had lost you.—Seven or eight days are passed since I gave you the permission of visiting me: I see you don't abuse the liberties in which the ladies indulge you."

I excused myself on account of my master's death, and the business in which I had been engaged; and added, in a very polite manner, that even in the midst of all my cares, the fair Laura had still kept possession of my heart. "Well, then, said she, I will reproach you no more; but own, that I have also thought of you: and as soon as I heard of the misfortune of Don Matthias, formed a project which perhaps will not displease you.—Some time ago I heard my mistress say, that she wanted to have a kind of steward in the house; a young man who should understand œconomy, and keep an exact account of the money disbursed in housekeeping. I have cast my eyes on your lordship, and believe you would not be an improper person for that employment." "I perceive

ceive, answered I, that I acquit myself in it to a wonder; for I have read Aristotle's *Economics*; and as to keeping accounts, it is my chief excellence. But, child, added I, there is one objection to my engaging in Arsenia's service."—"What may that be?" said Laura. "I have sworn, I replied, never to serve a plebeian: nay, I have sworn by Styx; and if Jupiter himself durst not violate that oath, judge if a valet ought to regard it."—"Whom dost thou call plebeians?" said the chambermaid with an air of disdain; dost thou rank actresses with the wives of counsellors and attorneys? know, friend, that the ladies of the stage are not only noble, but arch-noble, by the alliance they contract with men of quality."

"If that be the case, my princess, said I, I may accept of the place for which you have destined me, without derogating from the dignity of my resolution." "Certainly, she replied, to pass from the family of a beau into the service of a theatrical heroine, is still to maintain the same sphere of life; for we rank in all respects with the quality: we keep equipages like them; we live as well; and, at bottom, ought to hold the same esteem in civil life.—Really, added she, if we consider a marquis and player, thro' the course of a day, we shall find them upon a pretty equal footing: for, granting that the marquis, during three parts of the day, is, by virtue of his blood, superior to the player; the actor, during the remaining part, is raised still more above the marquis by the cue of an emperor or king whom he represents. This, in my opinion, invests us with such nobility and grandeur as at least equals us to the people at court." "O, truly! I replied, you are, without contradiction, on a level with the courtiers. What the duce! players, I find, are not such scum as I imagined! and you fire me with inclination to serve such honourable people."—"Well, then, said she, come back again in two days. I ask no more time to dispose my mistress for thy reception. I will speak to her in thy behalf; and

and as I have some interest with her, am persuaded that thou wilt be admitted into her service."

I thanked Laura for her friendship, and assured her that I was penetrated with gratitude, which I expressed with such transports as left her no room to doubt my sincerity.—We maintained a pretty long conversation together, and it would have lasted longer, had not a little page come to tell my princess that Arsenia wanted her; upon which we parted. I quitted the house of this actress, in the sweet hope of living in it at my ease, in a very short time; and did not fail to return at the time appointed. "I was just expecting thee, said Laura, in order to assure thee, that thou art now one of the household: come, follow me, and I will present thee to my mistress." So saying, she carried me into an apartment, composed of five or six rooms on a floor, each more richly furnished than the other.

Heavens! what luxury and magnificence! I believed myself in the palace of a vice queen; or rather, thought I saw all the riches in the world amassed together in one place; for there was variety of things produced in different nations; and one might term this apartment the temple of some goddess, to whom every traveller presented an offering of the rarities of his country.—I perceived the divinity seated on a large satin couch, charming to the eye, and fleck with the steams of sacrifice: she was in a genteel dishabille, and her fair hands were busy in preparing a new head dress, in which she was to perform that night. "Madam, said her maid, here is the housekeeper I mentioned.—I can assure you, that you will not find one more for your purpose." Arsenia looked at me very attentively, and I had the good fortune to please her. "Aha! Laura, cried she, there's a pretty young fellow. I foresee that I shall be very well satisfied with him." Then-addressing herself to me, "Child, said she, I like your appearance, and am at a word: if you serve me well, you shall have no cause to complain."

plain." I answered, that my whole study and endeavour should be to please her : seeing that we were agreed, went to fetch my cloaths, and was installed in my new office.

## C H A P. X

*Which is as short as the foregoing*

**I**T being near play-time, my mistress bid Laura and me follow her to the theatre. We went accordingly to her tyring-room, where she put off her ordinary dress, and took another more magnificent for her appearance on the stage. The curtain being drawn, Laura conducted and sat down by me in a place where we could both see and hear the actors perfectly well. I was disgusted at the greatest part of them, doubtless because Don Pompeio had prejudiced me against them. Several, however, were very much applauded, and, among these, even some who put me in mind of the fable of the pig.

Laura told me the names of all the actors and actresses, as they presented themselves ; and, not contented with this, the satirical baggage described their characters nicely, as they appeared. " This here, said she, is a noodle.—That fellow is a brute ; and that minx whom you see, with an air more lewd than engaging, is called Rosarda ; a very bad acquisition for the company ! she should be enrolled in the troop that is raising by order of the viceroy of New-Spain, to be transported forthwith into America. Observe that luminous constellation advancing : that fair setting sun, known by the name of Castilda : if she had exacted a stone from each of her lovers, as a princess of Egypt is said to have done heretofore, she could have raised a pyramid which would have touched the third heaven." In short, Laura gave no quarter ; her malicious tongue did not even spare her own mistress.

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Nevertheless I will confess my weakness: I was charmed with my chamber maid, though her character was not morally good. She satyriized so agreeably, that I was even in love with her malice. Between the acts she got up, to go and see if Arsenia wanted her; but instead of returning immediately to her place, she amused herself behind the scenes, in listening to the soft things that were said by the men who flattered her. I followed her for once, to observe, and perceived that she had a great many acquaintances; having reckoned no less than three actors, who, one after another, stopt to speak with her, and seemed to treat her with great familiarity. This was not at all agreeable to me, who feeling, for the first time, what it was to be jealous, returned to my seat so pensive and melancholy, that Laura observed it as soon as she came back. "What is the matter with thee, Gil Blas? (said she, with surprize.) What gloomy dæmon has taken possession of thee since I went away? Thou seemest sad and dejected." "I have too much reason to be so, my princess, (answered I); you have a little too much vivacity in your behaviour? I have observed you with the actors." "A pleasant cause of melancholy, indeed! (said she laughing) How! does that give thee any uneasiness? truly, thou art a meer novice: but thou wilt see a great many other strange things among us, and must accustom thyself to our easy way of life.—Harbour no jealousy, child; for that, among comedians, is looked upon as ridiculous; therefore we have none of it. Fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles, and cousins, with us, are the most complaisant persons on earth, and generally make settlements for their own family."

After having exhorted me to take umbrage at nothing, but look upon every thing with composure, she declared that I was the happy mortal who had found the way to her heart; and assured me, that her love should always rest on me alone. On this assurance,

rance, which, however, I might have distrusted, without the imputation of being too suspicious, I promised never more to be alarmed, and kept my word; for that very evening I saw her in close conversation, and heard her laugh heartily with several different men. When the play was over, we went home with our mistress, where Florimonda soon after arrived, with three old noblemen, and an actor, to supper. Besides Laura and me, there were, of servants in the house, a cook-maid, a coachman, and a page, who all joined in preparing for supper. The cook, who was no less dexterous than Dame Jacinta, was assisted by the coachman in dressing the viands; while the chambermaid and page laid the cloth, and I furnished the buffet with the finest plate, and several cups of gold, which were offered to the goddesses of the temple. I stored it likewise with bottles of the choicest wines, serving, in my own person, as cup-bearer, to shew my mistress that I could turn my hand to every thing. The deportment of the actresses, during the repast, filled me with admiration; they assumed airs of importance, and imagined themselves women of the first rank. Far from addressing the noblemen with the title of your excellence, they did not even give them that of your lordship; but called them simply by their names: true, indeed, these very noblemen had spoiled and made them so vain, by suffering them to be so familiar.—As for the actor, he, like a player, used to perform the hero, treating them without ceremony, drank to their health, and maintained (as one may say) the upper end of the table. “Upon my soul, (said I to myself) when Laura demonstrated the inequality of the marquis and player in the daytime, she might have added, that they are still more so in the night, since they spend it thus in drinking together.”

Arsenia and Florimonda being naturally wanton, a thousand hardy expressions escaped them, mingled with small favours and toyings, which were exquisite-  
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ly relished by these old sinners. While my mistress amused the one with a little innocent ribaldry, her friend, sitting between the other two, did not act the Susanna with them. While I was considering this picture, which had but too many charms for a young fellow like me, the dessert was brought in; upon which I set wine and glasses on the table, and went to supper with Laura, who waited for me. "Well, Gil Blas, (said she) what is thy opinion of those noblemen thou hast seen?" "They are, doubtless, (answered I) adorers of Arsenia and Florimonda." "No, (said she) they are old lechers, who visit coquettes without attaching themselves to them, and ask only small compliances, paying generously for trifling favours they receive. Thank heaven! Florimonda and my mistress are, at present, without lovers; I mean, such lovers as assume the husband, and want to engross all the pleasures of the house, because they support the expence of it. As for my own part, I am very glad it is so; and maintain, that a coquette of sense ought to fly these sorts of engagements. Why should she give up her liberty to a master? 'Tis better to acquire an equipage penny by penny, than have one at once at such a price."

When Laura was in a speaking humour, (which was almost always the case) words cost her nothing.—Heaven! what a volubility of tongue was she mistress of! She told me a thousand adventures which had happened to the actresses of the prince's company; and I concluded, from her discourse, that I could not be in a better situation to become perfectly acquainted with vice. I was unhappily of an age when this does not create much horror; and besides, the chambermaid painted these irregularities so artfully, that I beheld only the delicious side of them. She had not time to relate the tenth part of the exploits of the actresses; for she had spoke but three hours, when the noblemen and player withdrew with Florimonda, whom they conducted to her own house.

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After they were gone, my mistress giving me money, said, "There, Gil Bas, are ten pistoles to go to market to-morrow morning: five or six of our gentlemen and ladies are to dine with me, so that you must take care, and have every thing in plenty." "Madam, answered I, with this sum I'll engage to entertain the whole troop." "Friend, replied Arsenia, be so good as to correct your expressions; you must not call them the troop, but the company. We say, a troop of thieves, a troop of beggars, and a troop of authors; but learn to say, a company of comedians. The corps of actors, in Madrid especially, deserve to be called a company." I asked pardon for having used such a disrespectful term, and most humbly begged she would excuse my ignorance; protesting that, for the future, whensoever I should mention the gentlemen actors of Madrid in a collective manner, I would always call them the company.

#### C H A P. XI.

*How the players lived together; and their treatment of authors.*

I WENT to market next morning, in order to begin my office of butler: and as it was a meagre day, bought, by order of my mistress, some good fat pullets, rabbits, partridges, and other wild fowl; for as the gentlemen-players were not altogether satisfied with the behaviour of the church towards them, they did not think proper to adhere scrupulously to its commandments.—I brought home more victuals than would have sufficed twelve honest gentlemen, during three days, in carnival-time; so that the cook had work enough for the whole morning. While she prepared the dinner, Arsenia got up, and remained at her toilet till noon, when Signiors Rosimiro and Ricardo, two actors, arrived: Constantia and Celinaura, two actresses, came soon after: and at last Florimonda appeared, accompanied by a man who

who had all the appearance of a finished coxcomb. His hair was tied behind in a very foppish manner, his hat adorned with a plume of green feathers, his breeches smooth and strait, and his shirt, which was very fine, and bordered with a handsome lace, display'd at the slashes of his doublet. His gloves and handkerchief were contained within the hilt of his sword, and he wore his cloak with a grace altogether peculiar.

Though he had a good mien, and was very well made, I no sooner saw him, than remarking in him something singular, I said to myself, " This gentleman must certainly be an original." I was not mistaken; for he was a man of a very extraordinary character. As soon as he entered Arsenia's apartment, he ran with open arms, and embraced the actresses and actors, one after another, with gestures still more extravagant than those of the beaux. My opinion was not changed when I heard him speak; for he made affected pauses, and pronounced his words with great emphasis, accommodating his looks and gestures to the subject. Having asked Laura who that gentleman was, " I don't wonder, said she, at thy curiosity: it is impossible to see and hear Signior Carlos Alonso de le Ventoleria, even for once, without feeling the same emotion. I will describe him to the life. In the first place, he has been a player, but quitted the stage through whim, and now repents in earnest. His black hair, which thou seest, is dyed, as well as his eye-brows and whiskers; for he is older than Saturn: but as his parents, when he was born, neglected to have his name inserted in the parish register, he takes the advantage of their omission, and calls himself younger than he is by twenty good years at least. He is, moreover, the most self-conceited man in Spain, though he spent the first sixty years of his life in the grossest ignorance; but in order to become learned, he employed a preceptor, who has taught him to spell in Latin and Greek. Besides, he  
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has got an infinite number of good stories by heart, which he has repeated and vouched so often, that at length he actually believes them to be true. These he brings into conversation, and one may say, that his wit shines at the expence of his memory. He has the character of being a great actor, and I piously believe it; but nevertheless, I will own that he does not please me. I hear him repeat sometimes in company, and, among other faults, think his pronunciation too much affected, and his voice so quavering, that it gives an antic and ridiculous air to his declamation."

Such was the picture that my sweetheart drew of this honorary stage-player, who was really in his deportment the most haughty mortal I had ever seen. He play'd the orator too, and did not fail to produce from his budget two or three stories which he uttered with a studied air of solemnity. On the other hand, the actresses and actors, who did not come there to hold their tongues, were not silent; but began to talk of their absent comrades, not in a very charitable manner indeed: but this must be pardoned in players, as well as in authors. The conversation therefore kindling against their neighbours: "You cannot guess, ladies, said Rosimiro, a new piece of finesse of our dear confederate Cesarino. He this morning purchased silk stockings, ribbons and lace, which he ordered a page to bring to the rehearsal, as if sent by a certain countess." "Such a piece of knavery!" said Signior de Ventoleria, with a silly, vain simper, there was no such deceit in my time: we never dreamt of composing such stories: the ladies of quality, indeed, spared us the invention, by making the purchase themselves: it was their fancy." "Zooks!" said Ricardo, they have that fancy still; and was I permitted to explain myself—but one must be silent on these sort of adventures, especially when persons of a certain rank are concerned."

"Gentlemen, said Florimonda interrupting him,  
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truce with your intrigues, if you please, they are well known to all the world, and let us talk of Imenia. They say that nobleman, who has spent so much money upon her, has left her at last." "Yes, truly, cried Constantia, and I'll tell you more; she has lost a little citizen, whom she certainly would have ruined. I know the foundation of the whole affair: her Mercury committed a terrible blunder, by carrying to the nobleman a letter she had wrote to the citizen, and giving this last the billet intended for the lord." "These are great losses, my dear, replied Florimonda." "O! as for the nobleman, said Constantia, there is no great matter, he had spent almost his whole estate: but the citizen had just began his career, and had never passed through good hands; which is a thousand pities."

In this manner they discoursed before dinner, and their conversation turned on the same subjects while they were at table. But as I should never have done, if I undertook to repeat all the expressions full of malice and folly, which I heard, I hope the reader will excuse me for suppressing them, in order to describe the reception of a poor devil of an author, who came in towards the end of the repast.

Our page came, and said aloud to his mistress, "Madam, a man in marvellous foul linen, bedaggled all over, and who, so please you, looks very much like a poet, wants to speak with you." "Shew him up, answered Arsenia; don't stir, gentlemen, 'tis but an author." Sure enough it was one whose tragedy had been received, and who brought a part for my mistress. He was called Pedro de Moya, and, as he entered, made five or six profound bows to the company, who neither got up, nor returned his compliment. Arsenia only answered his profusion of civility by a slight inclination of her head. He advanced into the room, trembling and confused, and let his gloves and cloak fall; which having taken up, he approached my mistress, and presented to her a paper,

per, with more respect than that of a counsellor, when he delivers a petition to a judge; saying, "Be so good, madam, as to accept of this part, which I take the liberty to offer." She received it in a cold and disdainful manner, without even deigning to answer his compliment.

This, however, did not discourage our author, who making use of the opportunity to distribute the different parts of his play, gave one to Rosimiro, and another to Florimonda, who did not treat him a whit more courteously than Arsenia had done. On the contrary, the player, naturally very obliging, as these gentlemen commonly are, insulted him with the most cutting raillery, which Pedro de Moya felt, but durst not retort, lest his piece should suffer for his imprudence.

END of VOL. II.

Of the ADVENTURES of GIL BLAS.

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